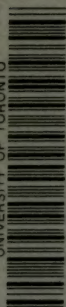
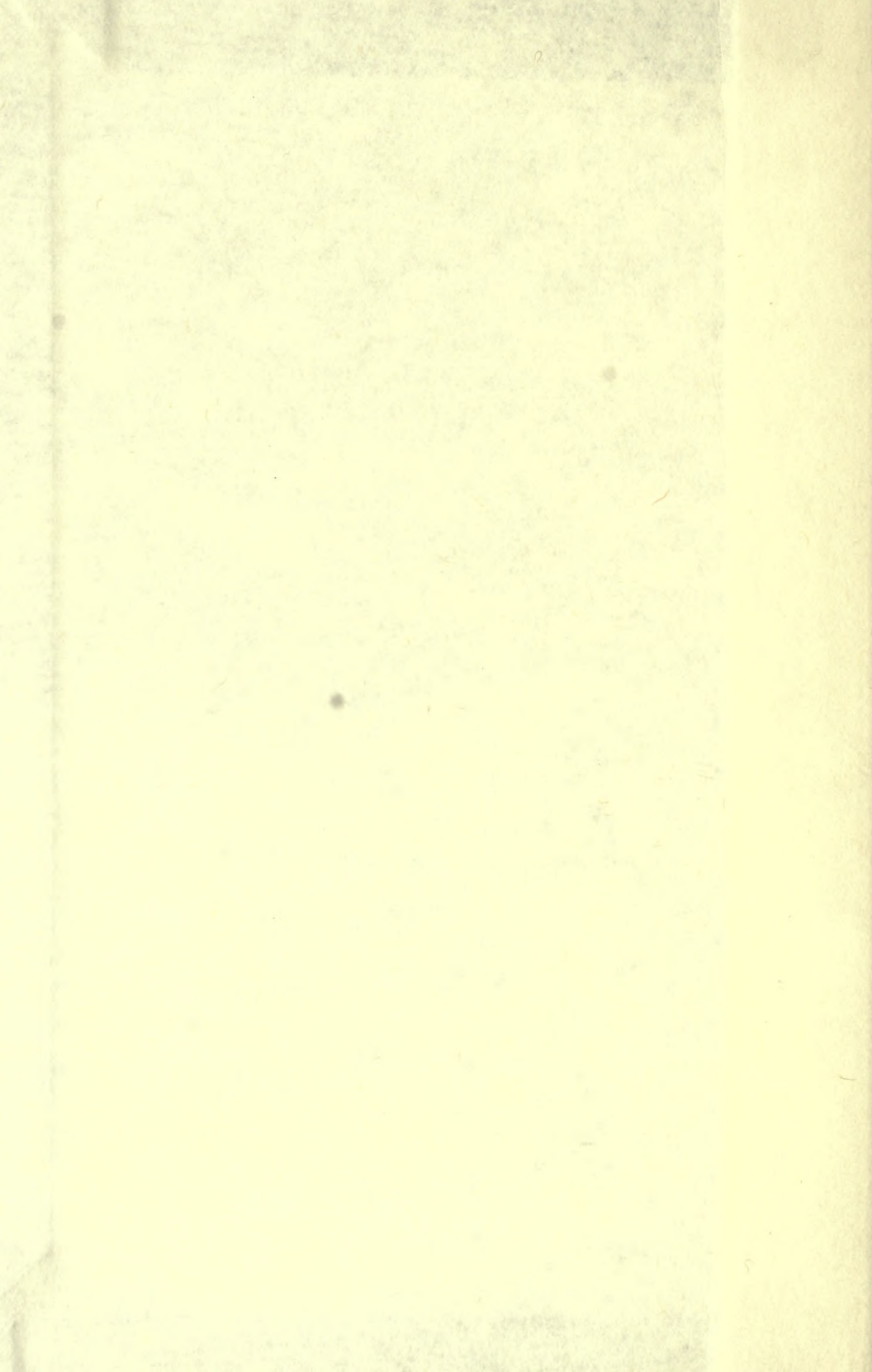


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SCANDINAVIAN MONOGRAPHS

VOLUME II

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BALLAD CRITICISM
IN SCANDINAVIA AND GREAT BRITAIN



ESTABLISHED BY NIELS POULSON

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BALLAD CRITICISM
IN SCANDINAVIA AND GREAT BRITAIN
DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY
SIGURD BERNHARD HUSTVEDT, Ph.D.

INSTRUCTOR IN ENGLISH IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER



PREFACE

THIS book has grown out of a dissertation presented in April, 1915, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Harvard University, under the title of *English, Scottish, and Scandinavian Ballad Criticism in the Eighteenth Century*. The entire study has since been revised; the treatment of the Scandinavian movement, in particular, has been considerably amplified. The original arrangement is retained, but the introductory chapter is almost wholly new. I have attempted to trace the development of interest in popular ballads as reflected in Scandinavian, English, and Scottish criticism, particularly during the eighteenth century, with special reference to the mutual influence—by no means negligible—of British and Scandinavian writers. The term “popular” is defined broadly by the material in Grundtvig and Olrik’s *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, Geijer and Afzelius’s *Svenska folkvisor*, and Child’s *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. I have confined myself, in the main, to theoretical and aesthetic opinion; textual criticism proper, and the significant influence of the ballad upon literature, I have treated less fully.

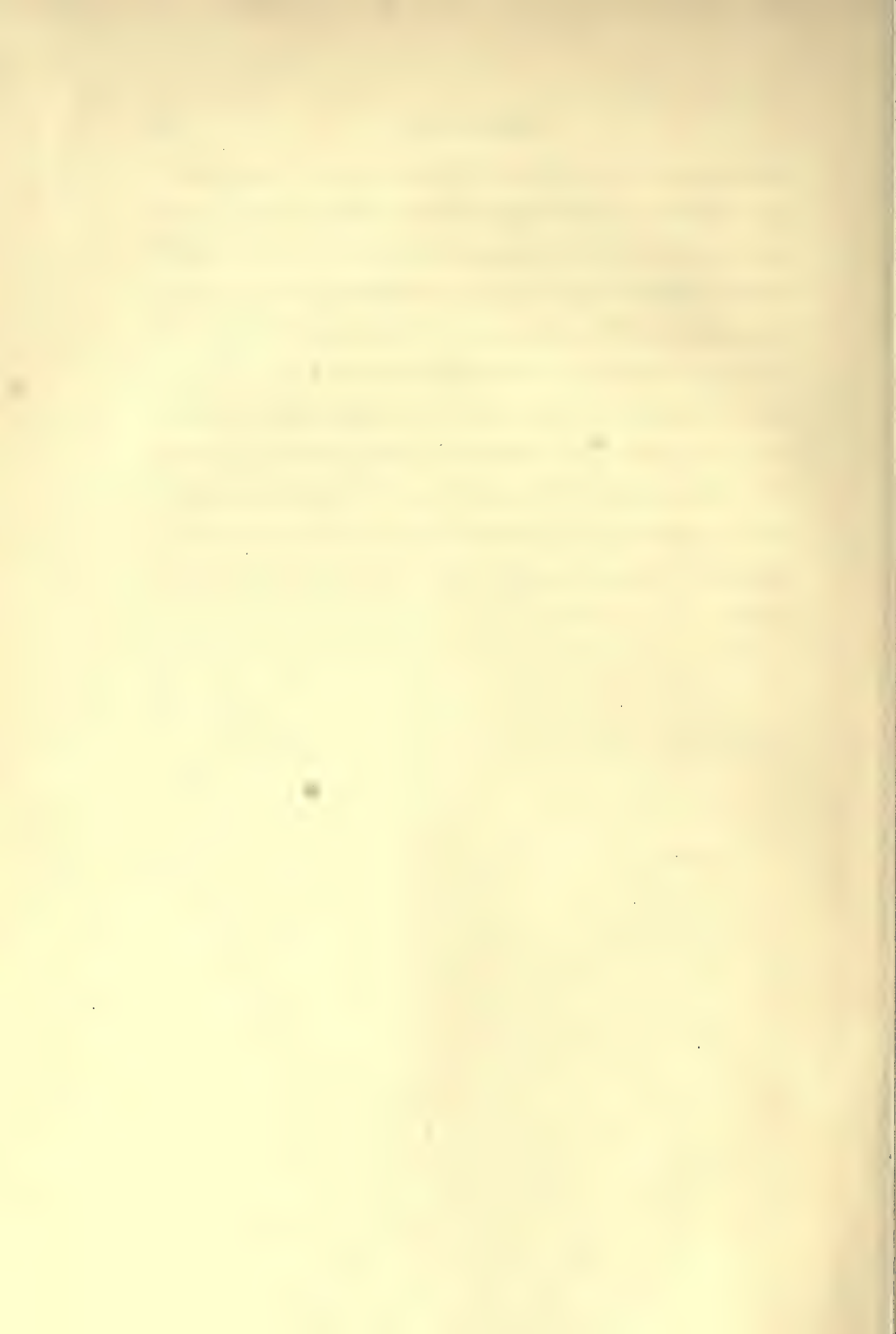
My ballad studies began under Professor W. M. Hart, of the University of California, from whom I have since received assistance in various forms. Most

of the work in this particular field, however, was done in Harvard University, and during a year's residence in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and England. Several foreign scholars have most kindly contributed information and references. It is a pleasure to record here my obligations to Professor Hjalmar Falk and Professor Christian Collin, to Knut Liestøl, docent, and to Fredrik Paasche and Francis Bull, lecturers, all of the University of Christiania; to Anton Blanck, docent in the University of Uppsala; and to Professor J. C. H. R. Steenstrup and Professor Axel Olrik, of the University of Copenhagen. Professor Olrik, in particular, who has continued so worthily the labors of Grundtvig, gave very liberally from his unrivalled fund of learning in Scandinavian balladry. To be able to associate with the name of Grundtvig's successor the name of Child's successor is a privilege that will be readily appreciated by all students of the ballad; Professor Kittredge, of Harvard University, has given me the most helpful guidance, both within and without the lecture-room, during the entire progress of the work. Professor Schofield, of Harvard University, has shown an active interest from the beginning, particularly in matters Scandinavian, and has contributed very largely to the appearance of the work in its present form. Dr. H. G. Leach,

secretary of the American-Scandinavian Foundation, has offered a number of valuable suggestions, and has borne much of the proof-reader's burden. The library functionaries of the universities of Christiania, Uppsala, and Copenhagen, of Harvard College, of the Royal libraries at Stockholm and Copenhagen, and of the British Museum, have courteously placed at my disposal the sinews of research. My father, H. B. Hustvedt, of Decorah, Iowa, has also assisted me in correcting the proofs. A more general acknowledgment must be made for other help of various kinds.

S. B. H.

Cambridge, August, 1915



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE names of Svend Grundtvig (1824–1883) and Francis James Child (1825–1896) will always be associated in the history of ballad investigation. *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* and *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* bid fair to remain for a long time the standard editions of the ballads of Denmark and Great Britain, and to keep ever green the fame of the two editors. They had many predecessors, some of them men of great distinction. Earlier workers had exhibited the most varied principles and practice in the treatment of texts and in their entire approach to the material. With very few exceptions, however, British and Scandinavian editors alike had felt it incumbent upon them to hew and shape the texts that fell into their hands, whether from manuscript or from oral tradition, according to a more or less definite conception of what the ballad once was as an ancient poem or what it should be as a modern poem. Grundtvig and Child, on the contrary, recognized fully the traditional character of ballad poetry, and put aside finally any attempt to restore a supposed original reading or to modernize the ancient verses into popularity. Though these principles had to some extent been advocated and practised before them, the Danish editor and the American editor were innovators at least in the recognition of the value of each version and variant, and in the thoroughness with which they set forth the relationship between the ballads of Scandinavia, Great Britain, and other countries. It is possible that Child might have developed the critical principles that came to determine the character of his collection even

if he never had known Grundtvig's work; but, as a matter of fact, Grundtvig began his publication several years before Child entered the field, and the American editor not only knew the work of his Danish colleague, but expressly accepted it as a model. To Grundtvig, therefore, belongs the enviable distinction of having opened a new era in Danish ballad criticism, and of having contributed very materially to the definitive edition of the ballads of England and Scotland.

When Grundtvig, at an early age, came before the public as the prospective editor of a collection of Danish ballads which for some time had been under contemplation in literary circles, he found that his plans were hitherto untried by Danish editors. Abrahamson, Nyerup, and Rahbek's *Udvalgte danske Viser* (1812-14), though in various respects a decided improvement upon the older editions by Vedel and Syv, was formed upon the principle, long established, of making a composite text from a greater or smaller number of versions, or of making arbitrary changes in a given text with a view to betterment. Nyerup and Rasmussen's *Udvalg af danske Viser* (1821), a continuation of the foregoing work, was prepared on similar lines. Geijer and Afzelius's *Svenska folkvisor* (1814-16) rested upon a like critical faith. Arwidsson's *Svenska fornsånger* (1834-42), indeed, recognized the value of fidelity to traditional readings as linguistic and literary monuments. Oehlenschläger, however, committed himself to the principle of modernization in his *Gamle danske Folkeviser* (1840); and another poet, Christian Winther, in his *Kjæmpeviser* (1840), though deprecating the changes which would have been necessary to adapt the ballads to Weyse's melodies, as he had originally

intended, likewise gave the old poems a new raiment. This procedure was natural enough for men of letters, but hardly so defensible for professedly critical editors.

Grundtvig's opportunity came in connection with an edition of ballads which the Society for the Promotion of Danish Letters had for some time been preparing to publish. Grundtvig, who, as early as 1843, had joined with another young student in a circular asking for ballad texts and tunes, and who, in 1842-46, had gained flattering notice by his translation of *Engelske og skotske Folkeviser*, took occasion on the invitation of the Society, to present, in 1847, a prospectus setting forth his principles with reference to the proper editing of ballads, and giving examples of the treatment he meant to apply to the individual numbers. When the *Prøve* and *Plan*, after receiving favorable consideration from the directors of the Society, were laid before the public, they were found to advocate ideas that to many seemed to be revolutionary indeed. Grundtvig, in his thorough discussion of the merits of the case, made it clear that it was not his purpose to create a composite text, but to present the entire corpus of versions and variants; to give "all that there is, and all as it is" was the fundamental principle in his method. Three reasons, in particular, had determined him to adopt this procedure: the authenticity of exact transcriptions, the linguistic interest in itself, and the importance of the antique form of the ballads. It was by no means a pedantic servility to the letter which had led him to take this course, but a conviction that out of many texts of the same ballad it was futile to select one as genuine; each version, shaped by the folk through long-continued tradition, had its own marked individuality, pre-

cious for itself as a record of the life and thought of its real author, the folk. For this reason, all texts older than the year 1700 should be given with the spelling of the manuscripts themselves, arbitrary and imperfect as it might be in certain instances. In support of his position he referred to Arwidsson's practice; but his chief authority was doubtless the Scottish editor, Motherwell, who, in his *Minstrelsy* (1827), had devoted a great part of his introduction to setting forth the principle, too little recognized before that time by British scholars, that fidelity to text was the essential duty of an editor. Grundtvig, in his *Plan*, quoted at some length from the Scottish writer, whose opinions the young Dane found positively stated in the declaration that "all versions of a ballad so preserved by oral transmission from one age to another, are entitled to be considered as of equal authenticity, and coeval production, one with the other, although among them, wide and irreconcilable discrepancies exist." Grundtvig, who had become acquainted with Motherwell's work while he was occupied with the instalments of his *Engelske og skotske Folkeviser*, was in a position to appreciate Motherwell's critical creed, since, according to his own statement, he was already at this time familiar with some thirty different editions of British ballads; and among them, surely, he had hardly found these ideas frequently asserted. Grundtvig's very thorough knowledge of English and Scottish ballad literature, whose close relationship to that of Denmark he clearly recognized, was perhaps a smaller part of his equipment; his knowledge of manuscript and printed sources in the Scandinavian countries was little less than exhaustive. With pardonable pride, therefore, he emphasized his own fitness for the post of ed-

itor, and the unrivalled richness of Danish ballad materials. In his eyes it was a patriotic duty to present this treasure to the people, its ancient possessor, in its own likeness, undiminished and unadorned.* Other men had other minds.

Among the prominent critics who differed from Grundtvig as to the proper method to be followed was N. M. Petersen, a very respectable authority on Danish literature. A few years earlier he had written at some length on the subject, basing his remarks on Abrahamson, Nyerup, and Rahbek's edition, which he found to be in various ways unsatisfactory. In his opinion, two things, in particular, should be kept in view by a ballad editor: the poetical idea in the ballad, and the mediaeval form in which that idea must be clothed. A selection of texts, in standardized archaic language, was his ideal.† Still, as a member of the committee of the Society, Petersen was influential in bringing about the acceptance of Grundtvig's plan in its general outlines, even though he continued for a season to defend his own divergent opinions.‡ Grundtvig's chief opponent, however, was Christian Molbech, an older man of considerable prominence in university and official life. In a series of articles he attacked Grundtvig uncompromisingly and with needless malevolence. Molbech held the general position that an edition of ballads should be undertaken by the methods governing the edition of an ancient classic; the ballad editor

* Svend Grundtvig, *Prøve paa en ny Udgave af Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, second edition, med Aftryk af "Planen" samt nogle Tillægssbemærkninger, Copenhagen, 1847.

† N. M. Petersen, *Om Behandlingen af Kjøpmøviserne, Annaler for nordisk Oldkyndighed*, 1842-43, pp. 177 ff.

‡ C. S. Petersen, *Fra Folkeviser-Striden, Danske Studier*, 1905, Part II, pp. 65 ff.

should possess the acumen necessary to hit upon the probable original text, or at any rate, to harmonize versions and readings in the archaic style. To print all versions would be not only unnecessary but foolish; many of the old ballads would not prove to be worthy of preservation, and those that should be made public exhibit, in many instances, the ridiculous misspelling of ignorant transcribers. In short, judicious selection and careful revision is the only defensible method. Upon this principle earlier Scandinavian and British editors have proceeded; Grundtvig's plan would produce an edition "without criticism, and beneath criticism." * In a later pamphlet Molbech charged Grundtvig with an excess of patriotic fervor, questioned the superiority of the ballad materials of Denmark, upon which Grundtvig had laid such great stress, and denied the universal applicability of Motherwell's method. † Molbech insisted, in a third screed, that the ballads should be issued as folk poetry for the entire nation, not as linguistic monuments for archaeologists and philologists. To this he appended some models of his own method of editing. ‡ In the meantime, he had begun an edition of one hundred ballads in his own fashion; § in this work he not only sought to anticipate Grundtvig, but made dishonorable use of manuscripts that

* C. Molbech, *En Betænkning over den bebudede nye Udgave af en Material-Samling til Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, Copenhagen, 1847.

† Molbech, *Kritiske Bemærkninger og Resultater, angaaende den Grundtvigske Udgave, Material-Samling og Kilde-Samling af gamle danske Folkeviser*, Copenhagen, 1848.

‡ Molbech, *Om de gamle danske Folkevisers Beskaffenhed og Forhold, deres Skikkelse i Haandskrifter og trykte Udgaver, og om Grundsætningerne for deres Udgivelse*, Copenhagen, 1848.

§ Molbech, *Et Hundrede udvalgte danske Folkeviser, hidtil utrykte*, Part I (i-xiv), Copenhagen, 1847.

Grundtvig had placed at his disposal for quite a different purpose. Various other critics, of greater or less importance, took the field against the youthful iconoclast; but Molbech represented the height of the opposition.

Grundtvig made little delay in publishing a rejoinder. His *Etatsraad Molbech og Kæmpeviserne, et Stridsskrift* (1848) disposed of the principal gainsayer in a manner creditable alike to the author's learning and tolerance. Molbech, he observes, has presented his edition as an example of "the only proper method;" Grundtvig, on the other hand, defends his own as one of several permissible methods. Poetical adaptations are perfectly justifiable in their sphere; but the great desideratum for the present is a complete, literal edition. Only on such a basis can a popular treatment reasonably be attempted. Further, Molbech has proved that his procedure is not among those that are permissible; on the contrary, it exhibits an arbitrary and capricious handling of the texts. Out of the abundance of his specific knowledge Grundtvig demonstrated with compelling finality that Molbech's entire campaign rested upon the most amazing ignorance, presumption, and spite. By the time the public had read Grundtvig's retort, Molbech no longer wore the lion's hide.

The young scholar, though thus opposed by men of considerable influence, was by no means lacking in powerful champions. His father, the venerable churchman, patriot, and poet, N. F. S. Grundtvig, who had published a popular edition of *Danske Kæmpeviser* (1847) for school use, came to the defence of Svend in a pamphlet, *Om Kæmpeviser-Bogen* (1847), in which he urged, characteristically enough, the right of the vernacular relics to appear in their ancient garb;

only a literal publication could do justice to the real author, the Danish people. When the ballads have been edited in their original shape, then let the poets work their will. He was well aware that he did not stretch parental partiality too far by asserting Svend's fitness to undertake his task.* Moreover, a number of encouraging letters came to the young man while the critical battle was being fought. B. S. Ingemann, the poet, who had made frequent use of ballad materials in his novels and poetical romances, writes, September 20, 1847: "The principal thing, to get a complete collection and an exact reproduction of all that is of value and importance both from printed and unprinted sources, will in this way be attained, and thereafter a popular edition could be issued, which, like that of Peder Syv formerly, might find a place on the shelf of the peasant." Paludan-Müller, the author of *Adam Homo*, approved Grundtvig's plan fully. In a letter dated October 9, 1847, he says, among other things: "An original text has never existed. . . . In general, one must much deprecate all enlarging, polishing, improving of these glorious relics of the past." December 19, 1847, he writes again: "It is my sincere conviction that, if opponents prevent the carrying out of *your* fundamental idea, they do Denmark a poor service. Therefore, do not lose courage." The English scholar, George Stephens, who later was to join with the Swedish ballad collector, Hyltén-Cavallius, in an edition of *Sveriges historiska och politiska visor* (1853), and to become the author of a work on *The Old Northern Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England* (1866-1901), writes from Stockholm, January 9, 1848, giv-

* N. F. S. Grundtvig, *Om Kæmpevisen-Bogen, en Stemme mod Hr. Levins, Hr. Liebenbergs, osv.*, Copenhagen, 1847.

ing his opinion of the matter at issue in expressive fashion: "As for your *making* a text, the idea is absurd. If you do, I will break your head. Touch one of the old Ballads if you dare. What you have to do is to give us the most complete copy of all the Danish Ballads that you possibly can." P. A. Munch, the Norwegian historian, says, with reference to Grundtvig's *Prøve*, in a letter of January 20, 1848: "An edition of the ballads, to serve as material for a subsequent critical adaptation, cannot possibly be carried out otherwise than as indicated by you."* These men were not alone in their approval.

Much as Grundtvig profited by the aid of his friends, his victory was doubtless due, in the main, to his own merits; he had proved conclusively that his recommendations were based on an unrivalled knowledge of the materials. In 1848, on the outbreak of the war, he shouldered a musket and went to the defence of his country; he returned from the unequal combat as a lieutenant. In 1850, the Society decided to proceed according to his plan, inconsiderably changed. The first volume of *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* appeared in 1853, and for thirty years the editor continued to issue at intervals the instalments of this work, and to serve his country in related literary enterprises. The collection was at first little noticed by the reviewers; but gradually it gained increasing recognition at home and abroad. The prophet came eventually into due honor in his own country; one may contrast, for instance, the declaration in 1861, of Israel Levin, one of Grundtvig's earliest opponents, that *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* is "a stain upon Danish science, a misfortune for

* For these letters and others bearing on the subject, see C. S. Petersen, *Fra Folkeviser-Striden*, pp. 87 ff.

Danish literature,"* with the recent testimony of a Danish ballad investigator, Ernst von der Recke, that Grundtvig's collection is "the greatest monument in the literature of Denmark."† Other men, notably Evald Tang Kristensen, in his *Jydske Folkeminder*, have walked in the footsteps of the pioneer. At Grundtvig's untimely death, in 1883, his mantle fell upon the youthful shoulders of Axel Olrik, who has continued, and still continues, in Grundtvig's spirit, and with like enthusiasm and ample scholarship, the labors of his predecessor. From that fully-equipped workshop, the "Dansk Folkeminde-Samling," attached to the Royal Library in Copenhagen, Professor Olrik, ably assisted by Ida Falbe-Hansen, H. Grüner Nielsen, and others, sends out from year to year fresh evidences of the well-nigh inexhaustible riches of Danish popular poetry, which more and more are making Denmark a resort for all who take an interest in traditional literature. From the beginning of Grundtvig's work, other Scandinavian scholars supplied him with materials. Landstad's *Norske Folkeviser* appeared in the same year as the first volume of the Danish collection. Sophus Bugge, in 1858, published a small book of *Gamle norske Folkeviser*; later, however, Bugge turned over much of his fund to Grundtvig. Several Swedish collectors gave similar assistance. Indeed, as time has passed, *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* has grown to be regarded as in a large measure the common enterprise and the common glory of Scandinavian balladry. The recognition of Grundtvig's principles elsewhere may be seen to the great-

* I. Levin, *De danske Folkeviser og Herr Svend Grundtvig*, Copenhagen, 1861, p. 50.

† C. S. Petersen, *Fra Folkeviser-Striden*, p. 87.

est advantage in Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*.

When Child first turned his thoughts to ballad editing, he was hardly in better case than Grundtvig, so far as good models were concerned. Early nineteenth-century editors, from Scott and Jamieson down, were more or less thoroughly committed to the principle of shaping a text according to their own devices. Motherwell was the shining exception. Nevertheless, Child, in his edition of *English and Scottish Ballads* (1857-59), recognized the principle of fidelity to text. "With respect to the texts," he says, "the Editor, after selecting the most authentic copies, has carefully adhered to the originals as they stand in the printed collections, sometimes restoring a reading which had been changed without reason, and in all cases indicating deviations, whether his own or those of others, in the margin."* At this time, though Child knew several Scandinavian ballad collections, he was unacquainted with Grundtvig's work. Before bringing out the second edition (1866), however, Child had seen a part of Grundtvig's collection, and gives it the following testimonial: "Let me make the warmest acknowledgments for the help received from Grundtvig's *Ancient Popular Ballads of Denmark*, a work which has no equal in its line, and which may in every way serve as a model for collections of *National Ballads*. Such a work as Grundtvig's can only be imitated by an English editor, never equalled, for the material is not at hand."†

* *English and Scottish Ballads*, ed. F. J. Child, Boston, 1857-59, 8 vols., pref., p. xi.

† Child, *English and Scottish Ballads*, second edition, Boston, 1866, 8 vols., pref., p. xi. The preface is dated 1860.

Not many years later a correspondence sprang up between the two editors, continuing till Grundtvig's death. In his first letter to Child, dated February 17, 1872, Grundtvig, who wrote in English, says: "You may conceive what a pleasant surprise it was to me, when in your edition of the English and Scottish Ballads I met a fellow-scholar, who knew beforehand the literature in question, and knew how to distinguish the very different kinds of poetical productions, older and later, popular and artificial, which by English editors, ever since the time of Bishop Percy, have been mixed up indiscriminately under the general head of 'Old Ballads.'" Grundtvig, having heard that Child intends to issue a new edition of ballads, offers to give assistance; the subsequent correspondence shows that the two editors were mutually helpful in this work during a period of ten years. In a later letter, probably also of the year 1872, Grundtvig says: "Let us have the old national ballads as antique and genuine as possible, and let us not prefer or substitute the bastards of modern forgers, however gifted and elegant and polished. The old times shall be seen in their *best*, but in their own clothes, and be judged by their own standards." In the same communication Grundtvig promises, in response to an invitation from Child, to come to the United States and give lectures on Northern subjects, if sufficient time is allowed for preparation. Nothing came of this project, however; nor did the two scholars ever meet, though their paths crossed in Europe in 1879.

Meanwhile, Child consulted Grundtvig as to the arrangement of the English and Scottish ballads. Grundtvig replies, in a letter presumably of the year 1877, that the comparative dearth of mythical and historical ballads in Great

Britain would seem to make inadvisable an arrangement which serves very well for the Danish ballads, namely, a classification according to subject-matter. In lieu of this, he proposes a division according to metrical form, which would represent roughly the chronological sequence: first, ballads in the two-line stanza; thereafter, those in the four-line stanza in eight and six; finally, those in the four-line stanza in eight and eight. This scheme, in its general form, Child eventually adopted; his work began to appear in 1882. Grundtvig writes, January 23, 1883, on the receipt of Part I of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, that he has sent to Child a copy of his popular edition of *Danmarks Folkeviser i Udvalg* (1882), on which he remarks: "You will admit that this is *also* an aim worthy of possessing: to awaken a *common* interest in the old, national poetry. . . . I hope you will not misjudge my expression, when I say that I look upon your work with some feeling of paternal pride, and perhaps a bit of national vanity, seeing the plan and the principles of editing and illustrating popular ballads, fostered by me thirty-five years ago, now universally acknowledged and even carried into execution on the other side of the ocean." He hopes that other lands may secure similar collections. "And then," he adds, "it will be a notorious fact in literary history that this movement took its origin in the little Denmark."* In view of the closeness with which Child followed the Danish model, and of the conspicuous learning with which he exemplified its advantages, it is not hard to understand Grundtvig's fondness for the work of his American colleague. "I still remember,"

* *Child MSS.*, arranged and indexed by G. L. Kittredge, Harvard College Library, about 30 vols., vol. ix.

writes Professor Olrik, in a review of the selected edition of Child's work, by Helen Child Sargent and Professor Kit-tredge, "the smile with which Svend Grundtvig said that 'now *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* has a living heir,' as he showed me, on an occasion during the last year of his life, the handsome quarto, the first part of Child's great ballad edition."* A few months after this incident, Grundtvig was dead. Child, however, had paid his debt in the preface to his new edition, where he recognized, in the warmest terms, Grundtvig's illustrious services to the ballad cause.

The preceding sketch makes it clear that European and American scholars have worked hand in hand in the most significant ballad research that has been carried through up to the present time. Grundtvig's indebtedness to British and American editors, and Child's indebtedness to Scandinavian, English, and Scottish editors and collectors, have fixed firmly that international collaboration of the value of which *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* and *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, in their comparative treatment of the popular poetry of many nations, are enduring witnesses. In the person of George Stephens we find a sort of embodiment of the mutual relations of British, Scandinavian, and American ballad scholarship. Born a Briton, he became in turn a ballad editor in Sweden, a professor of English in the University of Copenhagen, and an assistant to both Grundtvig and Child. Stephens, having received from Child a promise of a copy of the first part of the new edition, writes from Copenhagen, June 8, 1882, with his customary enthusiasm, "So we *shall* have a popular edition after all, but we first

* *Danske Studier*, 1907, Parts II and III, p. 173.

shall have the pleasure of spoiling the Philistines! Hurrah!"* The purpose of the following pages is to trace the interdependence of British and Scandinavian ballad criticism during the eighteenth century, and to recount the history of the long struggle in which the champions of the popular ideal, after some breaking of heads, at length "spoiled the Philistines," and thus earned the plaudits of George Stephens and sundry other interested partisans.

The relationship of the English and Scottish ballads to those of the Scandinavian countries has been often noticed. As early as the latter half of the eighteenth century, critics on both sides of the North Sea occasionally called attention to similarities. In the first half of the nineteenth century comparisons became increasingly frequent. Geijer and Afzelius, in their *Svenska folkvisor*, translated some English and Scottish ballads having Swedish parallels. Arwidsson, in his *Svenska fornsånger*, and Abrahamson, Nyerup, and Rahbek, in their *Udvalgte danske Viser*, also gave some attention to the subject. Grundtvig, however, in his book of translations, *Engelske og skotske Folkeviser* (1842-46), put the whole matter in a clearer light. According to his observations, British and Scandinavian ballads belong to a common Gothic fund. The best of the ballads of Britain, those of the Scottish Lowlands, took their rise in the region most intimately connected with Denmark, the real home of this kind of poetry. Altogether, he finds the most striking points of likeness both in spirit and in form.

Editors and critics in Great Britain, meanwhile, had been making similar contributions. Robert Jamieson was a pioneer in this field. His *Popular Ballads and Songs* (1806) not

* *Child MSS.*, vol. xxii, p. 139.

only brought before the public several Danish ballads in translation, but made a distinct advance in the criticism of the subject. As he presents the case, many ballads in the north of England and in Scotland go back as far as the time of the arrival of the "Cimbri" in Britain; "some of them were probably composed by the Scalds themselves." He notes general and specific resemblances. Finlay contended, on the other hand, in his *Scottish Historical and Romantic Ballads* (1808), that the trade might as well have gone from Britain to Denmark. In the *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* (1814), published by Weber, Jamieson, and Scott, Jamieson gave further attention to the same matter, and presented additional translations of Scandinavian ballads. Allan Cunningham, in his *Songs of Scotland* (1825), made some general observations to the same effect. George Borrow published a number of translations from the Danish in his *Romantic Ballads* (1826). William and Mary Howitt, in their *Literature and Romance of Northern Europe* (1852), discussed the Scandinavian ballads at considerable length, and exemplified their remarks by a number of translations. Alexander Prior, who held, against Geijer and Jamieson, but with Landstad, that the common characteristics of British and Scandinavian ballads were due, not to an early common origin, but to mutual exchange in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, published the first and only larger collection of translations, the *Ancient Danish Ballads* (1860). It remained for Grundtvig and Child, however, not only to give a far more thorough exposition of the relationship, but to present the material in such shape that the ordinary reader could make the more obvious comparisons, and that the scholar could grapple with the difficult problem of origins

and connections. The final word as to the actual relation between Scandinavian and British ballads, nevertheless, is still to be said.*

The similarity, in its main features, is quite evident. As to form, the ballads of Scandinavia and Great Britain are substantially alike. The particular marks by which they have come to be known appear in both groups. The essential narrative foundation, the impersonal tone, the bold dramatic outlines, the commonplace, repetition, and refrain establish the type. Differences there are, of course, such as the greater prevalence of the refrain in the Scandinavian ballads, and certain variations in refrain and in stanzaic form; but in general, the likeness is most conspicuous. Technically, the matter is quite clear.† The subjects, too, are practically the same. True enough, as Grundtvig pointed out, Great Britain is comparatively wanting in mythical and historical ballads, in both of which Denmark is peculiarly rich. Certainly, no English or Scottish historical ballad can compare in dramatic sweep and power with the longer ballad of *Marsk Stig*. For the rest, a balancing of merits is a thankless task. Let us say that the ballads of Denmark are

* For more recent discussion of the subject, see W. P. Ker, *On the Danish Ballads*, *The Scottish Historical Review*, July, 1904, vol. i, pp. 357-378; again, July, 1908, vol. v, pp. 385-401; the former article, translated and somewhat amplified, appeared in *Danske Studier*, 1907, Part I. Further, by the same writer, *On the History of the Ballads, 1100-1500*, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. iv. See also T. F. Henderson, *The Ballad in Literature*, Cambridge, 1912.

† For a detailed exposition of the technique of the English and Scottish ballads, and of the heroic ballads of Denmark, see W. M. Hart, *Ballad and Epic* ("Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature," vol. xi), Boston, 1907. On the Danish ballads, see J. C. H. R. Steenstrup, *Vore Folkeviser fra Middelalderen*, Copenhagen, 1891; the work has been translated into English by E. G. Cox, *The Medieval Popular Ballad*, Boston, 1914. Further, Axel Olrik, *Danske Folkeviser i Udvalg*, Copenhagen, 1899.

second to those of no other country, and drop the scales. As to individual numbers, correspondence in plot is of frequent occurrence. *Skøn Anna* has for more than a century been recognized as a counterpart to *Fair Annie*. Other pairs of considerable interest are *Babylon* and *Herr Truelses Døtre*, *Leesome Brand* and *Redselille og Medelvold*, *Clerk Colvill* and *Elveskud*, *The Twa Sisters* and *Den talende Strengelæg*. Instances might easily be multiplied. Altogether, the community both in form and in contents is great enough and striking enough to justify a comparative treatment of the parallel ballad movements in Scandinavia and Great Britain on this basis alone.

Moreover, the fortunes of the ballad have been much the same throughout the North. Like the traditional boy in the chimney-corner, it has gone through many vicissitudes, has proved its strength, and by the report of some witnesses has wedded the princess. That the ballad is a vital influence in modern literature is clear from the work of such men as Kipling and the late Holger Drachmann. That this is not a new thing under the sun the names of Oehlenschläger, Ingemann, Ibsen, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Scott bear witness. The influence of Scott upon Ingemann, of Oehlenschläger upon Ibsen, with the independent influence of the ballad upon each of these men, serves to indicate in part the ramifications of the freshet of popular poetry in the early nineteenth century. Setting aside for a moment the actual contact of Briton with Scandinavian, the coming of the new order of things in poetry was nearly contemporaneous, and due largely to the same causes, in both groups of people. Growing regard for the old ballads, which had been drawn into the light by editors and critics, was not the least of those

causes. For this reason, apart from other considerations, a comparative study might seem desirable in following the stream in its course from rivulet to river. When the above-mentioned convergence is taken into account, and earlier contact, as well, there would appear to be added appropriateness in trying to comprise in some sort under one view the rise and flow of ballad interest in England, Scotland, and Scandinavia.



CHAPTER II

CRITICISM BEFORE REENBERG AND ADDISON

FOR an introductory survey of the criticism preceding Addison's *Chevy Chase* papers in *The Spectator* no better point of departure can be found than Sidney's celebrated praise of the same ballad in his *Defense of Poesy*, which was text and gospel to Addison and many after him. The utterance must have been conspicuous in its own day from the character and influence of the man who made it. It has grown in renown with the gathering fame of its author as the flower of chivalry, and of the ballad itself as the justly memorable poetic record of the valor and virtue of knight-hood.

That *Chevy Chase*, doubtless the older version, had some such representative character even to Sidney's mind seems clear from the terms he used. "Is it the lyric," he asks, in regard to the function of poets, "that most displeaseth, who with his tuned lyre, and well-accorded voice, giveth praise, the reward of virtue, to virtuous acts? . . . I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet is it sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style; which being so evil apparelled in the dust and cobweb of that uncivil age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?" Here the glory of the deed is made to stand out through the poverty of the word. The same thought marks the sentence immediately following: "In Hungary, I have seen it the manner at all feasts, and other such meetings, to have songs of their ancestors'

valor, which that right soldier-like nation think the chiefest kindlers of brave courage.” *

It was, then, principally as a kindler of brave courage that Sidney valued the old song of Percy and Douglas. Its character of ballad was evidently accidental to him, and in the sharpest contrast to the polished lyric. Though we have not, unfortunately, a record of his opinion of other ballads, it is nearly certain that he would not have sought to shield the generality of ballad writers against those who use the poets roughly, and “cry out with an open mouth, as if they had overshot Robin Hood, that Plato banished them out of his Commonwealth.” † His point of view was quite aristocratic, though not at all in an odious sense; so from him came the aristocratic criticism of Addison and of Percy. Sidney was the gentle knight, who, stirred by the trumpet of former glory, blew a blast upon it himself as a memorial to the fair deeds of chivalry, and pricked over the plain to die as Percy and Douglas had died.

At the very time when Sidney was confessing the spell of the old English song, A. S. Vedel, historiographer to the king of Denmark, was occupied in collecting the ballads of his own country, as historic monuments and as relics of a vanishing art. The immediate occasion of the book, which he issued at Ribe in 1591, under the title of *It Hundrede Uduaalde Danske Viser*, for sheer interest deserves a brief rehearsal. We have the account from his own hand in the dedicatory preface addressed to Queen Sophia of Denmark. In the year 1586, Vedel, on a journey undertaken for the pur-

* Sidney, *The Defense of Poesy*, ed. Cook, Boston, 1890, p. 29.

† *Ibid.*, p. 35.

pose of topographical study toward his projected history of the kingdom, paid a visit to his former pupil, Tycho Brahe, the astronomer, at Uranienborg on the island of Hveen. While he was there, Queen Sophia came with members of her court to see some new astronomical instruments invented by the noble scientist. At table Tycho Brahe directed her attention to a collection of ballads which the historian had already made. The queen expressed great interest in the old poems, and requested Vedel to make a copy for her private use. Five years went by, however, before he fulfilled her wish; but then he did more than he had promised, and sent the queen, instead of a manuscript copy, a handsome printed book from his own press.

The work is notable as the first published ballad book of any consequence. It is notable, as well, for the character of its contents, and for the spirit in which it was prepared and published. As a compliment, no doubt, to his royal patroness, the editor put first in the volume a versified chronicle of the Danish kings from Dan to Christian IV, and last a Latin directory of the principal cities in Denmark, beginning:

*Clericali & Regali,
Turba gaude Hafnia;
Non est talis, nec aequalis
Civitas in Dania.*

Besides these two, the collection contains a round dozen of comparatively recent historical ballads for the glory of Danish kings; but by far the greater part of the verse is traditional in substance. Vedel, to be sure, issued the poems largely in composite versions. Such changes as he made in the texts are ascribable to the historian's reverence for truth of detail, and to the poet moralist's desire for a readable

edition. His approach to the material was, on the whole, aesthetic rather than critical.

The introduction is a most prepossessing statement of Vedel's point of view; it merits considerable attention as probably the first detailed ballad criticism ever penned.* He begins by invoking the blessing of God on the courteous reader. His address is dictated, he says, by the expectation that some of his readers may not be so gentle as to deserve the favor of Heaven. He foresees that envious men will find that he has wasted his time upon such idle fables, which are not profitable for edification, nor comprised in St. Paul's injunction concerning "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." To anticipate such carpers he intends to set forth briefly the use and profit of the old ballads. Very adroitly he suggests that songs in commemoration of mighty deeds were sung by the people of God in the old covenant, on their deliverance from the house of bondage in Egypt, and on David's victory over Goliath. Profane poets followed the example of the divinely inspired singers. Saxo and the Old Norse chroniclers knew and used the ancient poems. In a word, the old saying, "Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetæ," applies fully to the Danish ballads. He who reads them forgets chagrin and melancholy; not to speak of the sweet and subtle melodies, so captivating when sung by the clear voice of a woman or the strong voice of a man. To him who journeys by sea or land, to him who lies on a sick-bed or in prison, or is in other trouble, these pleasant poems are a most efficacious remedy against the "balneum diaboli,"

* A. S. Vedel, *It Hundrede Uduaalde Danske Viser*, Ribe, 1591. The introduction, or "Fortale," unfortunately does not appear in subsequent editions; it is printed in full, however, in Abrahamson, Nyerup, and Rahbek's *Udvalgte danske Viser*, Copenhagen, 1812-14, 5 vols., vol. v, pp. 35 ff.

which consumes like rust. But God forbid that the ballads should be praised above the supreme comfort of the Word and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The collection is not to be regarded as a pastime only, runs on Vedel's apology. There are other particular reasons for its publication. First, the poems contain the record of deeds which otherwise might perish. In the second place, the ballads offer many an example of good works and evil, to be followed or to be shunned by such as are willing to find instruction in the fate of others. In the third place, these old verses give a pleasing illustration of ancient manners and customs in war and peace; those were good times, when the relations between men, and especially between king and people, were such as of right they ought to be. In the fourth place, if there were no other reason for reading the ballads, their glorious old words and phrases deserve attention in themselves. For Danish prosody the ancient numbers are invaluable. Present poetry is but as night to day in comparison. There is, indeed, much of the fabulous in the old traditions; but so there is in the works of the classic poets, and the Danish writers should be granted a similar license. For the rest, each reader may believe what he will.

Let those who would criticize, he continues, think of these things. The ballads have long been sung, and they would still be sung if this book were never published. As they have come down by tradition, so they are sent forth; such alterations as have been made are of no great consequence, for the poems are neither written decrees nor sealed judgments by which anything of moment is bound or loosed. Those that are called historical are not circumstantial his-

tory; the poet has but taken from the material what suited his purpose. In closing, Vedel promises to publish at some future time certain ballads of love and marriage, which he keeps in reserve. His last words recommend the Christian reader to the protection of Almighty God.

Nothing much simpler and saner than this could be said on the whole question. Vedel's introduction has been reviewed at such length because in some way or other it touches almost every point to be considered in later writers. In his appeal to the glory of the past and to the obligations of noble example, he comes very near to Sidney. In his respect for the material as containing the spirit if not the letter of history,—a respect not always shared by subsequent historians,—in his veneration for the national customs, manners, and language found in the old songs, in his sympathetic outlook on the whole, Vedel stands unique as the apostle of the popular ideal in balladry, which takes the ballads for what they are, rather than for what they might be or should be. In this respect, while the sympathizers with Sidney's aristocratic point of view came comparatively early in the eighteenth century, the followers of Vedel came comparatively late, but brought about a fuller recognition of the ballads both in criticism and in literature.

Vedel's work in publishing the ballads, in collecting proverbs, and in translating (1575) Saxo's *Historia* into the vernacular, was part of a rather wide movement to preserve mediaeval literature against the destructive tendencies of the zealots who saw in it a relic of Papal thought and superstition,* and against the increasing encroachment of Latin

* For a dramatic presentation of this conflict, in part on ballad motifs, see Holger Drachmann's *Hr. Oluf han rider*.

as the language of learning. Vedel was at length deprived of his place as historiographer by reason of studious delay in bringing his labors to completion; but the history was finally written in the mother tongue (1595-1604) by Arild Huitfeldt, with some discussion of ballad characters. The ballad tone had been taken over into the hymn-writing of the period, somewhat after the fashion of the earlier *Gude and Godly Ballatis*, notably in such a collection as Sthen's *Vandreboeg* (1588). Furthermore, a number of historical, polemical, and satirical ballads, in a somewhat debased form, were written in the latter half of the sixteenth century, several of which got into Vedel's collection and a larger number into Syv's edition (1695); and the school drama contained songs in the ballad vein: H. J. Ranch's *Samsons Fængsel* (written 1599; printed 1633) and *Karrig Nidding* (printed 1633) are interesting cases in point.*

In Sweden, the plays of Johannes Messenius, professor at Uppsala, show a similar popular influence. His tragedy of *Signill* (1612) is based on the ballad story of Hagbard and Signe, though he probably used other sources. This play, as well as *Disa* (1611), *Swanhvita* (1613), and *Blanckamäreta* (1614), all on Northern subjects, contain interspersed poems in ballad measures, though chiefly of lyric content. In the dedication to *Swanhvita* the author tells that it was his original purpose to exhibit the history of Sweden in fifty tragedies and comedies. More important in this connection,

* S. Birket Smith, Ranch's editor, finds that a suggested influence in shaping the new realistic and popular elements of these plays from English comedians playing in Denmark in the latter third of the sixteenth century is not demonstrable, as a similar contemporary influence is demonstrable for Germany. See Smith's edition of Ranch's *Danske Skuespil og Fugleviser*, Copenhagen, 1876-77, introd., pp. xxvi-xxxiv.

he announces his intention of publishing a collection of the best Swedish ballads, and solicits contributions to that end; by doing such a work, he adds, he might hope to deserve well of his country.* Unfortunately for this project, Messenius, because of machinations with the Jesuits, was thrown into prison in 1616, where he remained nearly twenty years. But during this time he wrote an important historical work, *Scondia Illustrata*, in which ballad characters are touched upon. In his *Sveopentaprotopolis* (1611) he discusses the Hagbard and Signe story at some length, and holds, against Saxo's localization of the events in Denmark, that the tragedy took place in Sweden, in proof of which he cites various local traditions and place names.

A review of Vedel's sources will further illustrate the ballad interest of the period. Most of his materials were taken from manuscript collections of the nobility, in the making of which women had a conspicuous part. There are few traces of written ballads before the middle of the fifteenth century; various evidences of ballad themes, however, are to be noted in the church art of the time. The chronicles of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also contain some references. Toward the middle of the sixteenth century the nobles began to form books of poetry, often as autograph albums in which the contributions of friends were recorded. The so-called "Hjertebog," opening in the shape of a heart, was completed by a noblewoman in Jutland before 1553. A book from Skåne has its name from one Sten Bille, who made the first contribution under date of 1555. In these two typical collections traditional ballads and later lyrics appear

* J. Messenius, *Samlade dramer*, ed. H. Schück, Uppsala, 1886-88, pp. 83-86.

together; the material bears evidence of more or less sentimentalizing manipulation. Many of these keepsakes contain a much greater proportion of genuinely popular verse. Karen Brahe's collection is in this respect of a type distinctly noteworthy. She lived well into the eighteenth century, but her manuscript is of a date not much later than that of the others mentioned. The two hundred fine texts in the volume were brought together in Jutland from other manuscripts of the aristocracy, and in part from traditional sources; but while the older collections contain a proportion of from one-third to one-half actual ballads, that of Karen Brahe is unique in its unadulterated character. To a large extent it set the example in this respect for later amateurs.

From sources such as these Vedel made his redaction, often joining variants to give the most complete and readable text; to the whole he lent an aesthetic character and polish in the taste of current moralizing verse. Further, he made a simple division of the material into three classes: heroic and legendary ballads, historical ballads, and romantic ballads; each number he introduced by notes in which the historical, antiquarian, and moral interests expressed in the introduction were more particularly exemplified. The collection became very popular, and went through several editions during the course of the century.* Ballad broadsides, of a sort in circulation since about 1570, took up many of his texts. But the recording of ballads among the aristocracy went on much as before. Now and then the influ-

* For Denmark the editions which are known to me, and which I have examined, are of the years 1609, 1632, and 1643. A Christiania edition of 1664 added two ballads, one of them that of *Axel Tordsøn oc Valborrig Immersdaatter*.

ence of Vedel appeared in the joining of texts, and in prose or verse introductions. Newer poetry was mingled with the older, but the ballads always kept a prominent place. Toward the middle of the seventeenth century, Renaissance poetry, particularly pastoral, crowded the ballad out of favor to a great degree. The people in high stations gave up their earlier predilection ; their dying interest, however, raised memorials in a few larger private collections from various older autograph sources. In 1657, a woman named Mette Gjõe published thirty numbers from the residue of Vedel's promised love ballads, under the title of *Tragica*. This may be regarded as the culmination of the aristocratic interest in popular poetry.*

About the middle of this century belongs also the so-called *Kiempe-bog*, a compilation of poems in rather artificial ballad style, the subjects of which were drawn from older historical sources, such as Saxo, Snorri, and Huitfeldt. Saxo's story of Hamlet appears in double ballad stanzas.†

In Sweden the taste for ballads among the higher classes awoke somewhat later than in Denmark, and proved to be far less comprehensive. For this reason the manuscript collections of verse from the sixteenth century are mainly religious in content, with but few popular ballads. The earliest ballad book of importance was Harald Oluffson's, comprising pieces written down from about 1541 to 1581. But before the close of the sixteenth century a manuscript formerly in the possession of Queen Sophia of Denmark

* For the entire sketch of the relation of the Danish noblesse to balladry I am indebted to the courtesy of Professor Axel Olrik, of the University of Copenhagen.

† *Den danske Kiempe-bog*, ed. F. Barfod, Copenhagen, 1860.

had been brought to Sweden, and, with Vedel's publication, stimulated considerable interest among the nobility. Pär Brahe, not long afterward, collected, on his foreign travels, Italian, German, and French dance tunes, to which, after his return home, he added some German and Swedish ballads, which possibly at this time were actually used in the dance. Other important private collections of the seventeenth century were those of Bröms Gyllenmärs, Barbro Banér, and Samuel Älf. Further records, of smaller value, were made from time to time.* A most valuable manuscript, *Någre gamle wijser aff allehanda slag*, belongs to the beginning of the eighteenth century. After this, ballad interests suffered a marked decline till the early years of the nineteenth century, when a revival came on in earnest.† In all the Scandinavian countries, however, the devotion of the folk to popular poetry was doubtless relatively constant.

In England and Scotland no such marked interest on the part of the higher classes is observable. In fact, the various references to ballads in the literature preceding Sidney show no remarkable consensus of opinion in favor of popular poetry.‡ The list of ballads and romances in *The Complaynt of Scotland* was no doubt compiled by a sympathetic hand, but does not testify to much more than the currency of the pieces named. A fair, though necessarily incomplete, idea of the state of popular balladry before Sidney may be

* For unique reprints of Oluffson's, Brahe's, and Gyllenmärs's manuscripts, and of others, see *1500- och 1600-talens visböcker*, 6 parts, ed. Adolf Noreen and Henrik Schück, and Noreen and J. A. Lundell, Stockholm, 1884-1907.

† H. Schück and K. Warburg, *Illustrerad svensk litteraturhistoria*, second edition, Stockholm, 1911-13, 3 vols., vol. i, pp. 199 ff.

‡ For a collection of references, see F. E. Bryant, *A History of English Balladry*, Boston, 1913.

had from a consideration of the manuscript and printed texts that have come down to us.

Of traditional ballads (or pieces closely related to them), as defined by the material in Child's collection, the following existed in manuscripts of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries: *Judas, Als y yod on ay Mounday*, *Thomas off Ersseldoune*, *Inter Diabolus et Virgo*, *Robyn and Gandeley*, *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *St. Stephen and Herod*, *The King and the Barker*, and *Robin Hood and the Potter*. The *Gest of Robin Hood* had been printed by an unknown person about 1500 and by Wynkyn de Worde between 1492 and 1534.

The following were extant in manuscripts of the sixteenth century: *Crow and Pie*, *Flodden Field*, *The Hunting of the Cheviot*, *The Battle of Otterburn*, *Captain Car*, *The King of Scots and Andrew Brown*, *King Edward and a Tanner of Tamworth*, and *Sir Andrew Barton*; and in print, *Adam Bell*, *A Gest of Robin Hood*, and (in a seventeenth-century edition of an earlier book) *The Fair Flower of Northumberland*.^{*} This list leaves out of account a great number of ballads of various sorts gathered in such repositories as the Sloane manuscript, of the fifteenth century.

The drama in Sidney's time and after affords indications as to the extent to which the ballads were known, though it is not easy to reconstruct the actual opinions of the dramatists from the scattered references that occur in the plays. Here, as in other occasional mention of the subject in literature, the matter is complicated by the very general phrase-

^{*} For a chronological conspectus of the sources of Child's ballads, see Ewald Flügel, *Zur Chronologie der englischen Balladen, Anglia*, vol. xxi (new series ix), 1899, pp. 312 ff.

ology often used by the writers. A slighting expression thrown out at ballads as a class may be directed chiefly or solely at the more vulgar specimens. Similarly, a broadcast approval may leave the less admirable out of consideration. Where a definite ballad is specified, the case is quite another. For the drama, more than for anything else, the attempt to resolve a writer's opinions from utterances of his characters presents obvious difficulties.

It would hardly be safe, for example, to build a theory on Dobinet Doughtie's reference to Ralph Roister Doister in the play of the same name (act ii, sc. 1):

Of Songs and Balades also he is a maker,
And that can he as finely doe as Iacke Raker,
Yea and extempore will he dities compose,
Foolishe Marsias nere made the like, I suppose.*

Possibly this might indicate that the dramatist had a poor opinion of ballads, possibly not.

Whether Ben Jonson, as Addison testifies, actually said that "he had rather have been the author of *Chevy Chase* than of all his works,"† it may be difficult to judge from hints in his comedies. That he was familiar with the ballads is evident enough. *Eastward Hoe*, in which Chapman and Marston collaborated with Jonson, is full of tags and ends, but also of parodies. Jonson probably smiled at Ed. Kno'-well's query, upon Downe-right's leaving the room at the announcement of a song, "Can he not hold his water, at reading of a ballad?" (*Every Man in his Humor*, act iv, sc. 2);‡ but the smile need not have been in derision of the

* *Representative English Comedies*, ed. C. M. Gayley, New York, 1903-14, 3 vols., vol. i, p. 132.

† *The Spectator*, No. 70. ‡ *Representative English Comedies*, vol. ii, p. 77.

ballad. In Cob's words to his red herring in the same play (act iii, sc. 4), "I have not the hart to devoure you, & I might be made as rich as King Cophetua,"* the ballad is at all events made to serve the cause of mercy.

Jonson's real view is hardly to be got at by weighing the apparently favorable against the apparently unfavorable random shots in the plays, but rather by considering the use he, with some of his contemporaries, made of the ballad stanza among a number of old or untried lyric forms.† *Drink to me only with thine eyes* is as little in danger of being forgotten as *Chevy Chase*.

According to the sometimes over-refined method of drawing a precipitate of a dramatist's doctrines from the speeches of his characters, it would appear quite clear that Shakespeare had carefully balanced the merits of the two principal ballad stanzas, and decided for the more monotonous. Does he not make Quince say, "We will have such a prologue, and it shall be written in eight and six"? And does not Bottom meet the issue with a firm, "No, make it two more, let it be written in eight and eight"? (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, act iii, sc. 1.) By the same token, surely, Shakespeare means to heap obloquy on the defender of eight and six when he permits the clown to say, "I will get Peter Quince to write a ballet of this dream, and it shall be called Bottom's dream, because it hath no bottom." (*Ibid.*, act iv, sc. 1.)

As a matter of fact, Shakespeare's employment of the ballad is most varied. Consider, for example, Pistol's verses:

* *Representative English Comedies*, vol. ii, p. 67.

† Saintsbury, *The Prosody of the Seventeenth Century*, in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. viii, ch. ix, p. 229.

And I to Ford shall eke unfold
 How Falstaff, varlet vile,
 His dove will prove, his gold will hold,
 And his soft couch defile,

in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (act i, sc. 3), as compared with the pathetic effectiveness of the "Willow" song in *Hamlet*. The various references to named ballads speak an uncertain language. They give evidence of a knowledge of the subject, but not of much more. When all is said, however, Shakespeare probably knew a good ballad from a bad one as well as we do.

References in non-dramatic writers usually carry a more obvious interpretation. Deloney, for instance, in commenting on Flodden Field in his *Jack of Newbury*, commits himself fairly on a question of authorship when he says: "In remembrance of the famous atchieved victory, the commons of England made this song: which to this day is not forgotten of many."* Further, he introduces a version of *The Fair Flower of Northumberland*, as sung by the maidens in the same novel.† His own work as a balladist, moreover, made his real interest quite clear.

Among the earlier testimonies from historians, that of Hume of Godscroft is most significant. In a discussion of the battle of Otterburn in his *History of the House and Race of Douglas and Angus* (1644), he makes some most interesting observations on the two ballads. He distinguishes carefully between the "Scots Song made of Otterburn," as genuine, and "*The Hunting of Chiviot*," as fictitious. Sidney,

* Thomas Deloney, *Jack of Newbury*, reprint by R. Sievers in his *Thomas Deloney, Eine Studie . . .*, *Palaestra*, 1904, XXXVI, p. 184. The ballad of *Flodden Field* follows, pp. 184-186.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 195-199.

he thinks, had the first ballad in mind. For himself, he interprets the ballad from the same point of view that Sidney seems to have had: "Neither is it the Musick of that rough Singer that giveth it this Force, far less the Virtue of the gross Rhime; it is the Matter that giveth the Efficacy, and the Virtue of the Man that begetteth a resembling Virtue in the Heart; not by Poesy, but by the rightly described History."* In an earlier connection he testifies to a similar interest in the ballad as historical evidence. He supplements his discussion of the fate of another Douglas by the quotation of a fragment of *The Knight of Liddisdale*, but unfortunately gives only a summary of other matter in the "Song."† We shall have occasion to note a like relation to ballads on the part of various Danish and Swedish historians.

On the borderland between the historian and the antiquarian, Pepys's enthusiasm for the ballads may properly be recorded. The *Diary* contains several entries which show him at work on the collection that has since borne his name. His expressed delight at the prospect of hearing sung the "little Scotch song of Barbary Allen" (January 2, 1666)‡ is perhaps the best known of his comments, and peculiarly interesting from our "popular" point of view. An entry referring to his attendance upon the funeral of Sir Thomas Teddiman no doubt brings another kind of ballad into consideration; the passage is most illustrative of his zeal in the cause, which, as it appears here, knew neither time nor

* David Hume, of Godscroft, *History of the House and Race of Douglas and Angus*, Edinburgh, 1743, 2 vols., vol. i, pp. 194, 195.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i, pp. 143, 144.

‡ Samuel Pepys, *Diary*, ed. H. B. Wheatley, London, 1903-04, 10 vols., vol. v, p. 186.

place: "How unlike a burial this was, O'Brien taking out some ballads out of his pocket, which I read, and the rest came about me to hear! and there very merry we were all, they being new ballets" (May 15, 1668).*

Though we thus find Pepys collecting "new ballets," a great part of his interest doubtless was due to the general increasing occupation with antiquities, which, signalized by the founding of the Society of Antiquaries in 1572, grew greatly in scope during the seventeenth century. Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656) and his *Monasticon* (1655), Wood's *Historia et Antiquitates Universitatis Oxoniensis* (1674) and his *Athenae Oxonienses* (1691-92), and Hearne's *Reliquiae Bodleianae* (1703) are significant mile-posts. And the reestablishment of the Society of Antiquaries (1707) is a witness at once to the performance of the seventeenth century and to the promise of the eighteenth.

In Denmark and Sweden the seventeenth century was similarly remarkable for a number of antiquarian writers; their concern with the past, however, was more specifically directed to ancient literary relics. The Swedish scholar, Bureus, a pioneer in the modern study of runes, published his *Runtaflan* in 1599. In 1630, through his influence, the government appointed a commission to search for runic remains, ballads, and the like. Indeed, the period witnessed a great revival of interest in ancient Norse literature in the Scandinavian countries and in Iceland, carried forward by a number of gifted men. Since their labors, touching ballad matters at various points, had in their broader aspects a direct influence in making Scandinavian literature known

* Samuel Pepys, *Diary*, ed. H. B. Wheatley, London, 1903-04, 10 vols., vol. viii, p. 17.

in England, some account of certain of their views should be offered here.

As a beginning, we may look into the study of Olaus Wormius (Worm), the great Dane, during the preparation of the work on "Runic" literature, with which his name is principally connected. In 1632, he writes to the Icelander, Arngrimus Jonas (Jónsson), a prominent antiquarian, to prefer a request from his patron, the chancellor of the realm, "qui petit, sibi *Cantilenas* priscas historicas, tam in *Historia Norvagica* quam alibi extantes (*Skioldunga Viser*, ni fallor, vocant) cum interpretatione integras transmitti."*

Jónsson's answer is dated August 18, 1632: "Jam de *Schioldungorum Rhythmis* . . . a *Schioldo* illo Dan. Rege factum est appellativum, ut omnes ubique Reges, nostra lingua praesertim Rhythmistis, *Schioldungar* dicantur." As to the search for materials, he promises to do his utmost. What he says of his intentions is interesting for its light on the methods of research at that time, which, apparently, did not differ greatly from the approved course followed by later investigators: "Nuperime audiui vixisse in remotissimis nostris oris anum quandam, hujusmodi antiquitatum non ignaram. Ea si adhuc vivat, mittam nuncium, eumque poetam, qui talia ab ipsa percontetur."†

To Magnus Olavius (Ólafsson), also in Iceland, Worm sent a letter of the same purport as the above. The answer is interesting, particularly for its reference to Ragnar Lodbrok's *Epicedium*, which was to occupy so many Scandi-

* *D. Olaii Wormii et ad eum Doctorum Virorum Epistolae*, Copenhagen, 1751, 2 vols., vol. i, p. 313.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 316, 317.

navian scholars, and to be translated by Percy among his *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*. In part, Ólafsson's remarks run as follows: "Laetor *Ragnari Lodbroki Epicedium* cum meis qualibuscunque scholiis placuisse; dolet iterum, quod nulla jam ejusmodi mittere licet." He states, however, that he has collected a hundred "*Visarum . . . ex Relationibus Jarlorum Orchadum*;" these he has translated into Danish.*

Since a particular interest attaches to the technical terms used by these scholars, it should be mentioned that Worm, in a letter to Jónsson, of the year 1634, uses the verb "cantillant" in referring to the traditional singing of the ballad of *Tule Vognsen*.†

Magnus Ólafsson sent to Worm his century of songs. Worm, in his answer, expresses great pleasure that "*priscarum Cantilenarum Centuriam tandem videamus*. Quantum enim non modo delectationem, sed etiam ad antiquitates nostras recte intelligendas haec ferant momentum, indies experimur."‡

Worm continued to cast out his net. In 1635, he writes to Bishop Gislaus Ottonis, in Skálholt, Iceland, asking for anything that may illustrate "Runic" literature: "Si quae occurrant Veterum *Cantilenae*, imprimis a *Saxone* nostro in operis Historici initio citatae, apprime nobis inservirent."

The bishop answers in part as follows: "De *Cantilenis* veterum, a famosissimo *Saxone* citatis, nescio quid sit, quod in hac natione exstiterit, et in usu ac manibus majorum nostrorum, praeter *Eddu* et *Skalldu*, quae jam multo tempore vestris sunt in manibus."§

This correspondence is of considerable significance, not

* *Wormii . . . Epistolae*, vol. i, pp. 362, 364.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 322, 323.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 365-367.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 594.

only as throwing light on the preparation of a monumental work, but as giving some insight into the views of these men on the relationship between ballad and other older forms of Scandinavian verse. The excerpts show that they used "cantilena" as a rather inclusive term: in one case, it is equivalent to the somewhat broad designation "visa;" in another case, it comprises "Eddu et Skalldu;" and in still another instance, the corresponding verb "cantillant" refers definitely to a named ballad. Now later seventeenth-century Danish scholars commonly used "cantilena"* as a specific term for ballad, and "carmen" or "cantio" for other types of Old Norse poetry. It is not quite clear just to what extent Worm and his Icelandic correspondents actually confused Eddic and scaldic verse with the ballad; but they certainly made no definite distinction.

The material which Worm so diligently accumulated was embodied in the work which, chiefly, has made his name well known, *Danica Literatura Antiquissima*, "vulgo *Gothica dicta*" (1636). The book is notable as the repository of a good deal of valuable information on the older literature, and of specimens, though Worm was considerably mistaken as to the extent to which the runic alphabet was used. From the runic letters he drew up a text of the *Epicedium* of Ragnar Lodbrok, and other ancient poems, which probably never appeared in this form. He also gave Latin translations.

Among the critical material, the definition of "vise," supplied by an Icelandic scholar, is most interesting for our

* It is of interest to note in this connection that in classic usage "cantilena" had as a rule a derogatory sense, while "carmen" had a more general signification.

purpose. Here again the inclusiveness of the term is not clearly marked, and may well extend both to ballad and to other ancient forms. A "vise" is represented as a "Carmen seu Rhythmus, quo res gestas sui saeculi complexi sunt majores nostri." The word "vise," he thinks, is derived either from "*Eg vjjsa* seu *Jeg vijser*, id est ostendo," as setting forth things worthy of remembrance, or from "*Vijs* quod sapientiam notat," as presenting the wisdom of the ancients; * neither of these derivations is now recognized.

In his further investigations into Northern antiquities, Worm read the sermons in stones, which Saxo had read long before him. The result of these labors was the valuable work which appeared under the title of *Danicorum Monumentorum Libri Sex* (1643). During his preparation he was privileged on a certain occasion to drink, in the royal presence, from an ancient golden horn engraved with runic characters and mystic figures.† Soon after he wrote to Stephanius, a prominent scholar, for information in regard to the uses of horns in general among the old Scandinavians. Stephanius, in his answer, dated October 1, 1640, refers to Saxo's story of how King Sigar's queen gave to her daughter Signe's suitor, Hagbard of ballad fame, whom the mother hated, a horn of liquor portending his death. Further, he specifies the use of the drinking-horn and the war-horn in Vedel's "Cantilenae."‡

* O. Worm, *Danica Literatura Antiquissima*, Copenhagen, 1636, p. 176.

† This was the famous golden horn found in 1639, given by Christian IV to his son, later stolen and melted down, with a similar horn, in 1802. On the two, Oehlenschläger wrote, in the year last named, his notable poem, *Guldhornene*. On the importance of this poem in the romantic movement, see V. Andersen, *Guldhornene*, Copenhagen, 1896.

‡ *Wormii . . . Epistolae*, vol. i, pp. 189-191.

In Book Five of the *Danica Monumenta*, Worm subsequently offers a thorough discussion of the subject, in which the information supplied by Stephanius is put in its proper place. The ballad verses are given in Danish and in Latin. Thus the quotation from Vedel (Book II, No. 201):

*Det var unger Her Engelbret,
Bläser i forgyldene Horn:
Saa vog han de Vester Gyllands Mænd,
Som Bønder meje Korn,*

receives the following classic rendering:

*Ut tuba terribili sonitu Taratantara dixit
Cornuta Engelberti; bellica castra movent.
Haud secus ac culmos prosternunt falce coloni
Ense necat Gothos, fortiter occiduos.*

This is probably the first translation of a Danish ballad to be seen by English readers. In this case, as in other cases where he refers to Vedel's ballads, Worm consistently uses the term "cantilena."* It would seem that he had a high opinion of the antiquity and reliability of these sources.

In this connection it may be mentioned that, in 1652, one C. Berntssön translated, with some suggestion from Worm, and possibly with his Latin translation as a basis, Ragnar's *Death Song* into Danish, under the curious title of *Bildur Danskum*.

Meanwhile, Stephanius had been busy in the preparation of his important edition of Saxo's *Historia Danica*, which he published with notes in 1644-45. In his remarks on the references in Saxo's preface to the poetic sources of the chronicle, Stephanius does not identify them with the bal-

* O. Worm, *Danicorum Monumentorum Libri Sex*, Copenhagen, 1643, Book V, pp. 381 ff.

lads. He quotes, however, various Old Norse verses, among them Ragnar Lodbrok's *Epicedium*, all with Latin translations. He discusses also the different kinds of "Vijstur," which he calls "carmina."* But in commenting on certain similarities between older Scandinavian poetry and the classics, he remarks,—and here he may have been thinking of ballads,—“Tot praeterea in veterum cantilenis pulchra inveniuntur hyperbata.”†

A similar usage appears in Resenius's edition of the prose *Edda* (1665). In the preface he discusses various points of interest, among them the runes. He uses the term "carmen" of scaldic verse, but glosses it with "Viisa."‡ In his *Descriptio Samsoae* (1675), setting forth the history and antiquities of the Danish island, Samsø, identified with various saga and ballad figures, Resenius quotes the entire ballad of *Sivard Snarensvend*, under the designation of "cantilena," with a complimentary reference to Vedel.§ He mentions also the ballad hero, Marsk Stig, as having at one time had possessions on the island.|| Appended to the dissertation is a summary in verse, by Thomas Kingo, well known as a hymn writer, which rehearses the myth and saga recounted by Resenius.

One of the most deservedly notorious books of the period is the Swedish scholar Olof Rudbeck's *Atlant eller Manhem* (1679–1702). The tenet for which it is chiefly remarkable

* *Saxonis Grammatici Historiae Danicae Libri XVI*, ed. S. J. Stephanius, Sorø, 1644–45, pref., p. 12.

† *Ibid.*, p. 192.

‡ *Edda Islandorum*, ed. P. J. Resenius, Copenhagen, 1665.

§ P. J. Resenius, *Descriptio et Illustratio Samsoae*, Copenhagen, 1675, pp. 3–12.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 53.

is that Sweden was the mother of nations. To make this proposition good, a vast body of material of all sorts is gathered together, ancient and modern history, Hebrew and "Runic" literature, and what not. The book has both a Swedish and a Latin text, in parallel columns, differing slightly in details. It was Rudbeck's purpose to issue the work in the vernacular, in harmony with his zeal for the glory of Sweden; but he yielded to protest, and permitted a friend to make the Latin translation. Of specific interest here is the definition of the songs mentioned by Tacitus in *Germania*, as "militare canticum sive *Epinicion*, hoc tempore *Kiämpewijsa* Slagwijsa, / *i.e.*, carmen fortissimis viris et heroibus a poetis tribui solitum."* Rudbeck's fanciful work was principally responsible for a reaction against the study of antiquities, which affected ballad criticism unfavorably in the first half of the eighteenth century.

A passage from a *Dissertatio de Poetis*, vii (1681), by O. Borrichius, professor of medicine and philosophy at the University of Copenhagen, may be interjected here for the light it throws on the subject in general and, more particularly, on the terminology. He reviews various English and Scottish poets, such as Barclay, Thomas More, and Wedderburn, and quotes from George Herbert in the original. Thereupon he discusses the more prominent Danish writers; his reference to the stammering accents of the pioneers, as compared with the steadier utterance of more gifted successors, is directly to the point: "Balbutiebant olim vernaculi numeri in Petri *Lollii*, sive Legistae Proverbiis, in

* O. Rudbeck, *Atländ eller Manhem*, Uppsala, 1679-1702, 4 vols., vol. i, p. 637.

Cantilenis Heroum Andr. *Welleji*, in *Artificiis Vulpinis Schopperi*, in *Satyris Johannis Scanii*.”*

The famous treatise of the younger Thomas Bartholinus (Bartholin), *De Causis Contemptae a Danis adhuc Gentilibus Mortis* (1689), exhibits a relation to the ballads that stands in the sharpest contrast to the favorable, or at any rate tolerant, views we have hitherto met with. In connection with a reference to a passage in Ragnar Lodbrok's *Epicedium*,

*Gladr skal ek aul med Asum
i aundvegi drekka,*

he recounts from Snorri's *Heimskringla* the story of King Fiolnir, who was accidentally drowned in a vat of mead. This leads to a discussion of the merits of various Northern liquors. “Cerevisia,” he admits, was a very popular drink; “tamen etsi manifestum sit, praecipuum pugilum nectar fuisse medonem. Cui assertioni probandae non erit opus recurrere ad putidissimas et triviales cantilenas, quas *Kiempe Viser* vulgo vocant, omni prorsus luce indignas, cum ne instar quidem antiquitatis prae se ferant, ad colos aniles heri aut nudiustertius infelici vena compositae; cum ex purissimo antiquitatis fonte, ipsis artificiosissimis veterum Scaldorum carminibus, quibus nihil sacratius, illud ipsum abunde constet.”†

This opinion is significant. In its sharp condemnation of the ballad, chiefly by reason of the misuse of ballad evidence, it forebodes the similar criticism from Gram and Holberg in the first half of the eighteenth century. The clear distinction between the scaldic “carmen” and the ballad “can-

* O. Borrichius, *Dissertatio de Poetis*, vii, Copenhagen, 1681, p. 236.

† T. Bartholin (Filius), *Antiquitatum Danicarum de Causis Contemptae a Danis adhuc Gentilibus Mortis Libri Tres*, Copenhagen, 1689, p. 543.

tilena" is very illustrative as contrasted with the earlier bluntness of terminology and of theory. Bartholin lends emphasis to his views by the frequent quotation of poems from the *Edda* and from various sagas, and by the sedulous omission of ballads. The Old Norse verses are in each case supplied with a complete Latin translation, again a matter of importance for English readers.

Torfæus (Torfasen), too, in his *Historia Hrolfi Krakii* (1705), quotes various scaldic bits with Latin translations, always as "carmina." Of the reliability of such evidence he says, in discussing the *Biarchamal*: "Et haec ad fidem Historiae adstruendam suffecerint; quae tamen fabulis aliquot scatet; sed quae facile dignoscuntur: quamvis nec desint, qui quasdam earum pro veris agnoscant relationibus." * This utterance represents the moderate critical opinion which, among the Danish historians, particularly of the second half of the eighteenth century, was neither to reject nor to accept unconditionally the evidence of the older verse, but to weigh it on its merits and to use it, as a rule, for not much more than it was worth.

From the excerpts given it may be sufficiently clear how a definite demarcation between Old Norse poetry and the ballad gradually emerged from the earlier confusion. It should be evident, also, that the weight of opinion among the antiquarians of the seventeenth century, despite the prophetic fulminations of Bartholin, was in favor of the ballads. Further testimony will be brought forward in the consideration of contemporary prosodists, and of the ballad editor, Peder Syv.

The bearing of these antiquarian interests upon the history

* T. Torfæus, *Historia Hrolfi Krakii*, Copenhagen, 1705, preface.

of later ballad criticism in the Scandinavian countries need not be further emphasized here. But their bearing upon contemporaneous and subsequent criticism in England and Scotland may require some illustration. First of all, the employment of Latin by the Scandinavian writers made their works easy of introduction over-seas. Further, the connection between English and Continental scholars during this period was particularly close. Isaac Vossius, of Holland, lived in England from 1673 to 1688. His compatriot, Francis Junius, passed thirty years in England, during which he edited *Cædmon* (1655) and the Moeso-Gothic *Ulfilas* (1664-65).

The last-mentioned work brings us in touch with the interests of the man with whom the influence of the Scandinavian scholars came to a head in England. Hickes's *Institutiones Grammaticae Anglo-Saxonicae et Moeso-Gothicae* (1689) and his monumental *Linguarum Vett. Septentrionalium Thesaurus* (1705) mark most decisively the turning-point. The importance of these works for older English literature need not be dilated upon. Their significance in making Northern languages and literature known to scholars in Great Britain appears clearly enough, for example, in men like Percy and Gray.* In the *Thesaurus*, Hickes printed the Norse text of *The Incantation of Hervor*, from the *Hervarar Saga*, with an English prose translation.

The discussion has carried us well into the battle-ground of the Ancients and the Moderns. Temple's precipitation of the "Phalaris" controversy was a marked feature of the

* For a comprehensive treatment of the subject, see F. E. Farley's *Scandinavian Influences in the English Romantic Movement* ("Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature," vol. ix), Boston, 1903.

English development of the entire debate. Some of his other writings, however, concern us more immediately. In the *Essay of Heroic Virtue* (1690), he quotes several stanzas of the song of Ragnar Lodbrok in Worm's translation, with the graceful concession: "I am deceived, if in this Sonnet . . . there be not a vein truly Poetical, and in its kind Pindarick."* In the *Essay of Poetry* (1690), he reverts to the same subject. "Some of it," he says of the "Gothic Runes," as he calls the verse, "wanted not the true Spirit of Poetry in some Degree, or that natural Inspiration which has been said to arise from some Spark of Poetical Fire, wherewith particular Men are born; . . . these Songs or Ballads were usually sung at Feasts, or in Circles of Young or Idle Persons, and served to inflame the Humours of War, of Slaughter and of Spoils among them."† This early instance of critical occupation with Scandinavian literature has a general interest; the writer's somewhat condescending tone anticipates in a way Addison's ballad criticism. Particularly to be noted is Temple's use of the term "ballad."

We cannot linger long over the details of the controversy in which Temple soon found himself involved. Wotton, in his *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694), defended the Moderns against Temple's partisanship for the Ancients, and called attention to the advance of polite studies in the "Ultima Thule" of the Scandinavian countries: "Even the Northern kingdoms have had their Bartholin's, their Borrichius's, their Rudbeck's, their Wormius's,

* W. Temple, *Miscellanea*, London, 1691-92, third edition, 2 pts., Part II, pp. 239, 240.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 342, 343.

and their Hevelius's [Tycho Brahe], who have put in for that Prize which the Inhabitants of warmer climates seemed already in possession of."* The next edition (1697) of Wotton's work contained Bentley's proof of the spuriousness of the letters of Phalaris which Temple had praised so highly at the expense of modern literature. To the third edition (1705) Wotton added a *Defence* of the *Reflections* against criticism from Temple and others. New arrows had come to his quiver in the shape of Newton's *Optics* and Hickes's *Thesaurus*. The last-named work gave occasion for fresh enthusiastic comment on the learned Scandinavians, particularly Worm, and on Hickes as the purveyor to Englishmen of "the knowledge of their own originals." The application follows: "This is a part of Learning Sir W. Temple would not have despised, if he had been alive when this Book appeared; who in his *Essay upon Heroick Virtue* makes laudable use of some of the Ancient Runic Monuments, which *Wormius* or *Bartholin*, or both, helped him to."† This sketch may indicate sufficiently how the dispute brought the Scandinavian scholars prominently before English readers; in the case of Temple, at least, the ballad was to some extent involved.

Wotton's third edition contained, moreover, certain *Observations upon the Tale of a Tub*. The *Observations* may go for what they are worth, but *A Tale of a Tub* requires some attention for its specific relation to our subject. Swift's contribution to the controversy was made principally in *The Battle of the Books* (written 1697), in which Bentley fared

* William Wotton, *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, London, 1694, p. 348.

† *Ibid.*, third edition, pp. 504-508.

badly. But in *A Tale of a Tub* (written about 1696) he could hardly avoid trenching on the debatable ground of the day, since it was his purpose "to travel in a complete and laborious dissertation upon the prime productions of our society; which, beside their beautiful externals, for the gratification of superficial readers, have darkly and deeply couched under them the most finished and refined systems of all sciences and arts." After citing some of his researches, he proceeds: "The first piece I have handled is that of *Tom Thumb*, whose author was a Pythagorean philosopher. This dark treatise contains the whole scheme of the metempsychosis, deducing the progress of the soul through all her stages." *Dr. Faustus* and *Whittington and his Cat* come next; thereupon, *The Hind and the Panther*, "the masterpiece of a famous writer now living, intended for a complete abstract of sixteen thousand school-men, from Scotus to Bellarmine;" finally, *Tommy Potts*, "another piece, supposed by the same hand, by way of supplement to the former."*

The inclusion of the ballads, and particularly their use as satirical foils to *The Hind and the Panther*, shows no favorable opinion, at any rate of the examples selected. Later examination of the writer's treatment of popular verse, however, will put his views in clearer light.

From this digression in the name of Swift, the master of digression, we may return to take up the antiquarian and historical thread. Nicolson, in discussing King Robert II in his *Scottish Historical Library* (1702), gives a summary of Hume of Godscroft's opinion on *The Hunting of the Cheviot* and *The Battle of Otterburn*, but disagrees with Hume by

* J. Swift, *Prose Works*, London, 1897-1908, 12 vols., vol. i, pp. 55, 56. Cf. vol. i, p. 5.

referring the latter to an English author.* It would appear that he did not know the older version of *The Hunting of the Cheviot*, which was first published, probably, by Hearne some years afterward.

Hearne's part in this business will be treated in a later connection. But his *Remarks and Collections* contain an entry, under date of October 26, 1710, which contradicts Hume and Nicolson as to the reference of the ballads to the battle of Otterburn: "The Scots make the Battle of Otterburn to have been that which relates to the common Song of *Chevy Chase*, but that is altogether disagreeable to the Song, and happen'd in the time of Richard II of England and Robert II of Scotland, whereas the Ballad mentions King James and King Henry. Besides if we follow this account that they give the English would have the worst." But on April 11, 1719, he has another opinion, based on other evidence, and writes: "In the old *Chevy Chase* (that I have in MS.) which was composed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth 't is expressly call'd the *Battle of Otterborne*."† It was this version that Hearne published in 1719. In the *Remarks*, under date of August 10, 1711, Hearne gives a summary of Nicolson's opinion, but without comment.‡

The ballad in relation to Scottish history is noticed also by George Mackenzie in his *Lives and Characters of the Most Eminent Writers of the Scots Nation* (1708-22). Of the battle of Bannockburn he writes: "The *English* Historians tell us, That the Kingdom of *Scotland* was so overjoy'd with

* William Nicolson, *The Scottish Historical Library*, London, 1702, pp. 150, 151.

† Thomas Hearne, *Remarks and Collections*, ed. C. E. Doble, for the Oxford Historical Society, Oxford, 1885-1907, 8 vols., vol. iii, p. 73.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 203, 204.

this Victory, which they acknowledge to be the greatest Defeat that ever *England* met with, that the Women and Children did nothing but sing, upon all Occasions, a Ballad which was made against the *English*, and began thus,

Maydens of England sore may ye mourne,
For zour Lemmons zou have lost at Bannokborne
With Hevalogh.

What weend the King of England
To have gotten Scotland

With Rummilogh.”*

In these historical ballads the antagonism of the two countries finds clear expression. The sense of these national divisions marks the treatment of the ballads by Hume, Nicolson, Hearne, and Mackenzie. The patriotic note in their comments prophesies the national rivalries in ballad collection and criticism which will be noted as we proceed through the eighteenth century.

Mackenzie, in his preface, quotes Rudbeck in discussing the descent of the Caledonians from “Cimbri, Gothones et Sueones.” From him, possibly, he got the mistaken idea of the identity of the Scandinavians and Celts, which appears in the following interesting comparison: “The Celtae had their Bards or Poets, who sung the Illustrious Achievements of their Ancestors; so have our Highlanders. . . . The Celtae had their Schaldres, who recited the Genealogies of their Great Men; and our Highlanders have their Senachies, who do the same.”† The same confusion of Celtic with Scandinavian appeared later in Mallet’s *Introduction à l’Histoire de Dannemarc* (1755), but his error was cor-

* George Mackenzie, *The Lives and Characters of the Most Eminent Writers of the Scots Nation*, Edinburgh, 1708-22, 3 vols., vol. i, p. 275.

† *Ibid.*, pref., p. vi.

rected by Percy in his translation, the *Northern Antiquities* (1770).

Before proceeding to review the English and Scottish interest in the collection and publication of ballads between Sidney and Addison, we may survey the "Cimbrian" activities which culminated in Syv's ballad book of 1695. Professor Paludan, in his *Danmarks Litteratur mellem Reformationen og Holberg*, describes the second half of the epoch treated, between 1620 and 1720, by the title, "The Period of Orthodoxy. Linguistic and Poetical Renaissance." The Reformation century, he points out, brought merely an aftermath of mediaeval ballad, rhymed chronicle, moralizing satire, and religious drama; the seeds of a new development had not yet taken root. Latin, of course, was the language of theology and of science; but the vernacular, as we have already seen, had its advocates. Even Worm and his colleagues, though they employed the scholastic medium, gave an added impulse to the study of the mother tongue by their resuscitation of the older literature and antiquities.* The movement was carried forward by prosodists and students of later Danish linguistics, Syv among them. The fact that some of these men wrote in Latin only illustrates the nature of the conflict. The contact of vernacular and ballad continued throughout the century.

It will be recalled that Vedel emphasized the importance of the ballads for Danish prosody. The influence of his recommendation is noticeable in the writers to be considered. We may glance first at Bertilus Canuti Aquilonius's rather formal treatise, *Ad Poeticam Danicam Deductio* (1641). It

* J. Paludan, *Danmarks Litteratur mellem Reformationen og Holberg*, Copenhagen, 1896, pp. 175 ff.

offers few poetic illustrations, some ballads but more religious verse. The temper of the man appears in such an expression as the following part of the caption to chapter xiii: "Idioma Danicum inter optima maximaque esse Europae." In some sort this may serve as a motto for his successors.

In contrast to the foregoing work, J. M. Corvinus's *Ex Rhythmologia Danica* (1649) is mainly a collection of illustrations. He shows a very keen interest in purifying the Danish language. Though he, too, draws largely upon church hymns, he quotes ballads as exemplifying concatenation, and notes a number of refrains. His unpublished *Linguae Danicae Exercitatio* is an amusing document. He agrees with Worm in deriving Danish, through the runic characters, from Hebrew. As contributory evidence, he quotes from the ballad in Vedel's collection which traces the genealogy of the kings of Denmark through Dan back to Japhet. The work shows, in general, a high respect for the ballads.

Severin P. Gotlender carried his enthusiasm for the vernacular so far as to write his *Synopsis Prosodiae Danicae* (1650) in Danish. He gives considerable attention to the function of the ballads in ancient times as records of events, and to their later importance as a medium of tradition. He finds, however, that they, as well as older hymns and other verse, were very carelessly rhymed, a fault against which his whole work is a strong protest. Most of his examples are taken from religious sources. The same author's *Prosodia Danica* (1671), also in Danish, is an elaboration of the foregoing treatise. "Suum cuique pulchrum" he gives as his reason for dealing with vernacular poetry; he who does not hold his native speech in due honor should be

pelted out of the country as unworthy of the name of Dane. This work gives proportionately the same share as the former to ballad matters, but adds nothing of importance to his earlier views.

By far the most noteworthy work in this category is Peder Syv's philological dissertation, *Nogle Betenkninger om det Cimbriske Sprog* (1663). Too much, he insists in the preface, has been written on Greek and Latin; "it behooves me first to give my native land and tongue some honor." His discussion of languages in general, and of the "Cimbrian" in particular, is more remarkable for enthusiasm than for scientific accuracy.* Danish poetry he divides into three periods: ancient, middle, and modern; the ballads fall in the middle period. In the treatment of them he gives more attention to technical details than any writer before him. He notes the irregularity in syllable length and rhyme. In touching upon the refrains, he mentions examples of the device in older Scandinavian poetry, and in Theocritus, Virgil, and the Psalms. In the ballads, he finds, they have sometimes little to do with the sense of the poem. He records parallels with the classics. Dædalus had wings of wax; the heroes of the Danish ballads had their feather coats. Instances of exaggeration, he observes, are occasionally to be met with, as when Mimering Tand is described as being "fifteen yards beneath the knees." But Virgil goes further still, and makes Polyphemus bump his head against the stars. Similarly, Syv points out the magic effect upon birds and fishes of the singing of a ballad:

* Syv included German and Russian with the Scandinavian languages under the term "Cimbrian;" this group he finds to be more nearly related to Hebrew than to Greek and Latin.

*Alde de fiske i floden vare
 De legte med deris hale;
 Alde smaa fugle i skoven vare,
 Begyndte at kvidre i dale.*

On this he remarks: "This is after the manner of Virgil and Ovid. Thus sang Orpheus and Amphion." It is almost like reading Addison on *Chevy Chase*. Syv's parallelism, however, implies no sort of concession to classical standards.

The ideas and methods which mark this work appear again in Syv's collection of ballads. In 1695 he published a new edition of Vedel's *Viser*, to which he added a hundred collected by himself from various sources. The preface is a long and serious essay, in which particular attention is given to linguistical and prosodical phenomena. The Danish ballads, like the language, are of ancient, middle, and modern date. All of the first hundred belong to the middle period; so do most of the second hundred, though among them there are some of later composition. The ballad form is of great antiquity, as the mention of ballads by Saxo would indicate, not to speak of the classics and the Bible. Though many of the older Danish examples, through long tradition, have suffered changes in content and in phrase, they are still of value as historical evidence; at all events, they exhibit ancient customs and manners. They have technical features in common with Homer. The similarity of some of them to the songs in the *Heldenbuch* must be laid to mutual influence. As for the composition of the ballads, it is folly to attribute it to spinsters at their wheels; by such people, rather, have they been mutilated.

Thus far of the subject in general; the rest of the preface Syv gives over to his own hundred. Many of them,

such as the ballads of Vidrik and of Hagbard, and those dealing with blood-vengeance, wife-stealing, and the like, properly belong to the ancient poetry; but since they have been altered by tradition, they are placed in the middle period. The former hundred remain unchanged, except for the correction of a few misprints, and the addition of certain stanzas from manuscript. The second hundred are drawn from manuscripts and from oral tradition. A few alterations are introduced, particularly for the improvement of the metre. Further, Vedel's collection had three parts; the added material is arranged in two divisions: ballads relating to kings or nobles, and ballads relating to humbler, though still worthy, people. Finally, though many of the poems are poor, more of them are good; and nothing should be despised which can serve to illustrate ancient history and language.*

As explained in the preface, Syv includes some pieces older than the ordinary ballads, and some of modern composition. Among the more ancient poems are *Bjalkemaal hin Gamle*, and several attributed to Ragnar Lodbrok, among them the *Epicedium*, slightly altered from Berntssön's Danish translation. As instances of the newer numbers the following titles are self-explanatory: *Klage over Christian IV des Död*, and Bishop Pontoppidan's *Lykönskning til Christian IV des Regering*. But by far the greater part is traditional ballad material.

Syv's strong interest in linguistics and prosody was chiefly responsible for the changes he made in the texts toward the exclusion of foreign words and the improvement

* Peder Syv (and Vedel), *Et Hundrede Udvalde Danske Viser . . . Forögede med det andet Hundrede*, Copenhagen, 1695, preface.

of the rhymes. His notes bear witness to the same interests, and seldom to an appreciation of poetic values. Though the two editors had much in common, Vedel's point of view was in the main aesthetic, while Syv's, in consonance with the preceding studies in the vernacular, was markedly philological.

Syv's edition, in spite of the manipulation of the texts, was of great importance in adding to the existing store of traditional poetry. How the work struck a contemporary may be seen from two interesting letters to Syv from Otho Sperling, one of the polyhistor's of the time, who corresponded also with Woodward of Gresham College on Norse antiquities. One of the letters to Syv, written apparently before the publication of the collection, is notable for its very definite identification of the ballads with the poetic *Edda*. In April, 1695, he writes to express his great pleasure with the ballad book, and adds: "Si Eddam Saemundi, quae tota cantilenis istis veterum est referta, cum notis Tuis excudam sumeres, majus opera pretium Te facturum crederem. . . . Quid! si notas Latinas adderes, legere etiam possent ab exteris." * He writes again, November 16, 1695, to thank Syv for a complimentary copy of the ballads; but he finds himself under the necessity of asking for another, since he had hardly read the preface before a friend snatched the book from his hand and kept it, "licet apud externos vivens." †

Thus at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Denmark had a respectable body of ballad text. In addition,

* O. Sperling, *Epistolae*, MS. Gl. Kgl. Saml., No. 3092: V, Royal Library, Copenhagen, 2 vols., vol. ii, No. 134.

† *Ibid.*, No. 142.

there had accumulated a good deal of criticism. Most of it was intelligent and genuinely favorable; but the note of disapprobation also had been sounded, particularly by Bartholin. His point of view, chiefly, was to characterize the criticism of the following decades.

In England and Scotland, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the ballads had been discussed not a little, and private collections had been formed or were forming, such as those of Pepys and Roxburghe; but the eighteenth century was to fill its quarter before the first printed edition appeared, the *Old Ballads* of 1723-25. Meanwhile, much good traditional material had been accumulating here and there. A number of Child's texts go back to the seventeenth century. For the first fifty years there are about a dozen ballads from printed sources, among them the second part of *Adam Bell*, *Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard*, *The Baffled Knight*, and *The Noble Fisherman or Robin Hood's Preferment*. The Percy Folio Manuscript (about 1650) contained some forty titles not yet noted, among them *Earl Brand*, *King Estmere*, *Sir Cawline*, *Tom Pots*, and *The Heir of Lynne*. And among the forty odd new numbers printed in the second half of the seventeenth century are *The Elf-in Knight*, *Bonny Barbara Allen*, *Johnie Armstrong*, *Robin Hood and the Tinker*, and *Robin Hood and Allen a Dale*; on the whole, this period was comparatively rich in Robin Hood ballads.

Some of the poetical miscellanies bordering upon the eighteenth century should be mentioned as containing several ballads of one sort or another, and as showing the tendency toward the collection of such material, which was so specifically to mark the greater part of the next hundred

years. Their terminology illustrates how little specialized was the conception at this time of the ballad as a distinct type of poetry.

The *Miscellany Poems*, commonly called "Dryden's," from the third edition (1702) of which Addison probably took his text of *Chevy Chase*, included in its fourth edition (1716) several ballads under various designations, among them *The Miller and the King's Daughter*, *A Scotch Song called Gilderoy*, and *An Old Ballad of Robin Hood, his Parentage, Birth, Breeding, Valor*, etc.; further, Hickes's translation of *The Incantation of Hervor*.

Wit and Mirth, or Pills to Purge Melancholy (five editions, 1699-1720), made public eventually a number of pieces called ballads, only a few of which were really popular. The terms "ballad" and "song" are used indiscriminately. *Chevy Chase* is designated as a "song" in the editions of 1712 and 1719. This is the case also with *The Baffled Knight* (1719). *The Friar and the Maid*, *A Riddle Wittily Expounded*, and *The Life and Death of Sir Hugh of the Grime* (1719) are not particularly described. The three last named texts appear in the Child collection. The *Pills*, though it thus brought out some unpublished popular ballads, was of no critical importance for ballad definition.

The collection contained some Scottish songs, and no doubt stimulated the publication in Edinburgh of James Watson's *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems* (1706-11). Although the work contains no genuine traditional ballads, it deserves mention as a pioneer publication in the Scottish vernacular, from which so much distinguished popular poetry was to come.

With the consideration of one more publication this part

of the discussion may be brought to a close. *The Muses Mercury* for June, 1707, printed *The Nut-brown Maid* with a short introductory essay, *Of the Old English Poets and Poetry*, which should have some attention. The writer says definitely that the poem is not a ballad, but "an allegorical Poem." He regards it as contemporaneous with *Chevy Chase*, and assigns to both too remote a date in placing them shortly after the battle of Otterburn. With a reference to Sidney's praise of the ballad he makes a noteworthy comparison of the two poems: "If the Martial Spirit in the latter had such an effect on Sir Philip Sidney's Heroick Mind, this will have the same on the minds of those that are to be touch'd by the Truth and Simplicity of Nature; for she cannot be better painted, if we will excuse the *Antique Colouring*; and yet the Expression, as old as 't is, has the advantage of Sir Philip's belov'd song." * This decidedly literary judgment is interesting for its own sake, and also as a prophecy of the distinctly literary criticism of the succeeding period, and of the illustrative comments on the two poems which we shall find to indicate in a measure the advance of ballad criticism throughout the eighteenth century.

In glancing back over the period from Sidney to Addison, we note in England and Scotland a good deal of interest in the private collecting of popular ballads, and some interest in getting them into print, but very little criticism, properly so called. It is remarkable that, while Denmark got two very respectable editions, no one in Great Britain undertook to gather and publish the considerable body of available material, to the sufficiency of which the Percy Folio Manuscript alone would bear ample witness; the more remarkable

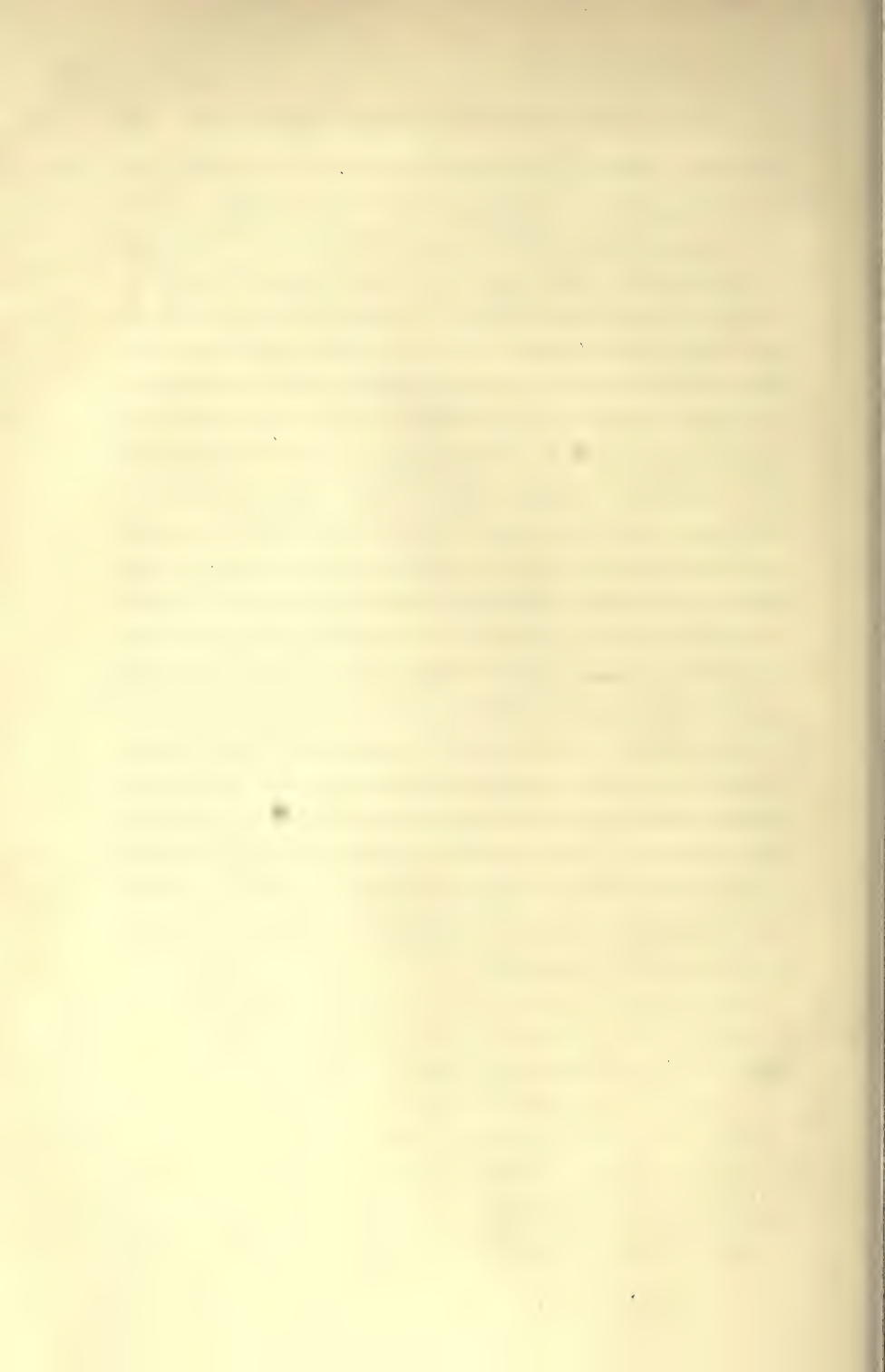
* *The Muses Mercury*, vol. i, No. 6, pp. 127-139.

since Sidney's pointed commendation seems to have been kept in mind. It is somewhat strange, too, that with the exception of those who echoed Sidney's opinion, very few appear to have found occasion to record their views on the subject; the dependence of Danish criticism on Vedel's texts, however, suggests one reason for the paucity of English comment in the absence of a collected body of material. The various references to ballads in the drama and other literature, it is true, show a definite knowledge of a number of specimens, but often fail to leave a clear impression of the judgment of the writers. Certainly there is very little that can be described as theory. Even the definition of the term "ballad" was most uncertain. Elizabethan usage was very lax; in the course of time, however, the designation became more restricted, and Philips's *New World of English Words* (sixth edition, 1705) defined "ballad" as "a common Song sung up and down the Streets." Scandinavian terminology had become more exact. In contrast to the devotion of the Danish prosodists to the ballads, Bysshe, in his *Art of English Poetry* (fourth edition, 1710), recognized the common measure only with a stanza from Davenant. The influence of Scandinavian antiquarian research upon English scholars no doubt contributed to the furtherance of ballad interests by turning attention upon older English literature; English balladry, however, had no such definite poetic contact with the past as Danish balladry had in Old Norse literature, particularly the Eddic poems.

Moreover, the early part of the eighteenth century was not, on the whole, an auspicious season for a proper appreciation of the better qualities in the best ballads. Poetical and critical tendencies in general, British and Scandinavian,

were setting strongly in quite another direction. Boileau had spoken, and Pope was about to speak; the *Essay on Criticism* was advertised in *The Spectator* just a few numbers before Addison's first paper on *Chevy Chase*. Holberg, in 1706, had come from Norway to spend two years in London and Oxford, whence he was to carry new ideas into Danish literature. Scotland, though unusually tenacious of her poetical traditions, had for a century and more been largely silenced by a sort of ban upon secular verse. On the other hand, the copious diurnal production of ballads in England, under the service of party and personal feeling, had not tended to elevate the dignity of the ballad name. Addison, therefore, mediating between Ancients and Moderns, between neo-classic and romantic views, did most wisely in choosing for his first ballad criticism a ballad which might expect as great a favorable suffrage as any.

Chevy Chase is something of a symbol in the history of balladry. It is a distinguished example of a number of ballads which grew out of the contentions of England and Scotland. A national rivalry of another sort, a critical and literary *Chevy Chase*, is traceable in ballad comment and collection throughout the eighteenth century. The first period is notably English.



CHAPTER III

ADDISON TO THE OLD BALLADS: REENBERG'S
ARS POETICA TO HOLBERG'S COMEDIES, 1701-1725

ADDISON'S papers on *Chevy Chase* in *The Spectator* (May 21 and May 25, 1711) mark clearly the beginning of a new era in English ballad criticism. For they not only brought about a more general appreciation of popular poetry, but they gave a very strong impetus to its collection and publication, a work which soon was to grow greatly in volume and to have an unusual influence on the course and quality of English literature in general. Percy's *Reliques* and Scott's *Minstrelsy*, notable not by their isolation but by their preëminence, indicate sufficiently what was to come from *The Spectator's* somewhat hesitant praise of the old song of Percy and Douglas.

Even in the absence of exact information as to Addison's general knowledge of ballads, the occasion of his critique may be fairly conjectured. He quotes Sidney's classic commendation as his chief authority. His acquaintance with Temple's essays might be assumed had he not left a record of it.* The dispute between the Ancients and the Moderns had hardly yet subsided; and the text of *Chevy Chase* from the *Poetical Miscellanies* (1702), which Addison probably used, was accompanied by a Latin translation that at once would suggest ancient standards. These are, perhaps, the principal influences, aside from a real admiration for the ballad, that determined him to compare it with the classic masterpieces, which about the same time were canonized

* See *The Spectator*, ed. Henry Morley, London, 1868, containing the original and the revised texts, No. 21, p. 37.

anew, in Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, as the first and last resort of all literary judgments.

The two essays are a curious blending of good sense and formalism. They show clearly that Addison had an unaffected respect for the old ballad, but that he felt that a liking for anything so rude must be justified by precedent and rule. The first note he strikes is one of confidence in an untutored popular taste, a doctrine sufficiently bold to command attention. "It is impossible," he says, after recording his delight in the traditional songs and fables he had heard on his foreign travels, "that anything should be universally tasted and approved by a Multitude, tho' they are only the Rabble of a Nation, which hath not in it some peculiar Aptness to please and gratify the Mind of Man." After this appeal to the universality of human nature, however, he soon indicates the true scope of his judgment as to the "essential and inherent Perfection of Simplicity of Thought," which alone can have such a general bearing, and at the same time outlines the tendency of his observations in a passage revealing his conciliatory attitude toward the accepted critical standards: "*Homer, Virgil, or Milton*, so far as the Language of their Poems is understood, will please a Reader of plain common Sense, who would neither relish nor comprehend an Epigram of *Martial*, or a Poem of *Cowley*: So, on the contrary, an ordinary Song or Ballad that is the Delight of the common People, cannot fail to please all such Readers as are not unqualified for the Entertainment by their Affectation or Ignorance; and the reason is plain, because the same Paintings of Nature which recommend it to the most ordinary Reader, will appear beautiful to the most refined." This he supports by the dec-

laration that *Chevy Chase* is the “favourite Ballad of the common People of England,” that “*Ben Johnson* used to say he had rather have been the Author of it than of all his Works,” and that Sidney had approved it in the highest terms.

Proceeding from the critical rule that “an heroick Poem should be founded upon some important Precept of Morality, adapted to the Constitution of the Country in which the Poet writes,” Addison finds that the author of *Chevy Chase*, like Homer and Virgil, had such a purpose; for the last stanza reads:

God save the King and bless the Land
In Plenty, Joy and Peace;
And grant henceforth that foul Debate
'Twixt Noblemen may cease.

The single combat and the death of Percy, which Addison justly sets apart for the highest admiration, gives occasion, with the dying words of Douglas, for definite comparisons with the *Aeneid*. “Turnus,” he writes, “did not die in so heroic a manner; tho’ our Poet seems to have had his Eye upon *Turnus’s* Speech in the last Verse,

‘Lord Piercy sees my Fall.’

—*Vicisti, et victum tendere palmas*
Ausonii videre.”

Earl Percy’s lamentation over his enemy, to which the critic finds a parallel in “Aeneas’s *Behaviour* towards *Lausus*, whom he himself had slain as he came to the Rescue of his aged Father,” is particularly praised as “generous, beautiful, and passionate;” but the reservation follows: “I must only caution the Reader not to let the Simplicity of

the Stile, which one may well pardon in so old a Poet, prejudice him against the Greatness of the Thought.”*

In the second paper Addison carries the discussion further into detail, to show that “the Sentiments in that Ballad are extremely natural and poetical, and full of that majestic Simplicity which we admire in the greatest of the ancient Poets.” Without definitely imitating the classics, the balladist was “directed to them in general by the same Kind of Poetical Genius, and by the same Copyings after Nature.” The critic dissents, however, from Sidney’s judgment as to the “rude Stile and evil Apparel of this antiquated Song,” and finds that “at least the *Apparel* is much more *gorgeous* than many of the Poets made use of in Queen *Elizabeth’s* Time, as the Reader will see in several of the following Quotations.”

The stanzas offered in support of this point are in almost every case paralleled by citations from Virgil. The account of the killing of Sir Hugh Montgomery by an English archer, Addison finds especially admirable; the thought in the lines,

Against Sir Hugh Montgomery
So right his Shaft he set,
The Gray-goose Wing that was thereon
In his Heart blood was wet,

he insists, “was never touched by any other Poet, and is such an one as would have shined in *Homer* or in *Virgil*.”

“Thus we see,” he concludes, “how the Thoughts of this Poem, which naturally arise from the Subject, are always simple, and sometimes exquisitely noble; that the Language is often very sounding, and that the whole is writ-

* *The Spectator*, No. 70 (May 21, 1711), pp. 113-116.

ten with a true poetical Spirit. . . . I shall only beg Pardon for such a Profusion of *Latin* Quotations; which I should not have made use of, but that I feared my own Judgment would have looked too singular on such a Subject, had not I supported it by the Practice and Authority of *Virgil*.”*

This closing admission, which vitiated much of the force of a criticism otherwise somewhat open to attack by reason of its timid leaning upon authority, gave the author into the hands of the enemy. There were those who found that, despite Addison's appeal to Virgil, his judgment looked too singular on such a subject. Among them was John Dennis. In a letter, *Of Simplicity in Poetical Compositions, in Remarks on the 70th Spectator*, written in the same month as the *Chevy Chase* papers, he attacks Addison very vigorously.

“You desire to know,” he replies to a correspondent who had asked his opinion, “whether I believe the Author of those two Papers to be in Jest or in Earnest. To which I answer, that he is neither in Jest nor in Earnest; not in Earnest, because he does not believe what he says; nor in Jest, because he does strenuously endeavour to convince the Reader of the Excellence of that old Dogrel.” Addison's argument from popularity with the rabble to the deserved suffrage of cultivated readers Dennis rejects contemptuously, with the plausible reasoning: “As if some faint and imperfect Touches of Nature might not recommend a thing to those [who] by reason of their Ignorance or their Stupidity, know not how far an Author ought to go in such a Case to express the Truth of Nature, which faint and imperfect

* *The Spectator*, No. 74 (May 25, 1711), pp. 119-121.

Strokes would by no means satisfy those who are able to judge of that Truth."

The essential difference of opinion expressed here as to the grounds of judgment, in that "Truth of Nature" to which both writers appeal, comes out further in the less ingenuous and less well-taken observations on the particulars of Addison's remarks. The resort to the favorable opinion of Ben Jonson, Dennis holds to be unwarranted, and argues, "that if Ben. ever talk'd at that rate, (which I will not absolutely pretend to deny, tho' I very much doubt it) he only did it to laugh, and to ridicule some of the sottish Admirers of that obsolete Song." The authority of Sidney, which was not to be so summarily dismissed, the critic attempts to negative by the quibble that Sidney had the tune, and not the words, in mind. Dennis comes to the conclusion that the writer of the old song never knew what poetry was. In proof of this he declares, on the authority of Horace and Boileau, that poetry must be figurative, passionate, natural in diction, exalted, harmonious; none of these qualities has he been able to discover in the ballad. He closes his vigorous, but somewhat specious, animadversions with a sweeping rejection of Addison's classic parallels: "What Shadow of Likeness can there be between *Virgil* and *English* Dogrel, where there is nothing common between them, nor Ground-work, nor Figure, nor Harmony; the Dogrel being utterly destitute both of Figure and Harmony, and consequently void of the great Qualities which distinguish Poetry from Prose."*

Addison was not to be driven from his position at the

* John Dennis, *Original Letters, Familiar, Moral, and Critical*, London, 1721, 2 vols., vol. i, pp. 166 ff.

first onset. Two or three weeks after the appearance of the *Chevy Chase* papers, he came forward with a similar criticism upon the "old Ballad of *The Two Children in the Wood*," which he had found pasted on the wall of a house in the country. The discovery had given him a "most exquisite Pleasure," and he had determined to write of the ballad as "one of the darling Songs of the common People." He takes up the subject from practically the same point of view as in the case of *Chevy Chase*. Either he found this ballad inferior to the first, or there is some temporizing, as compared with his view of *Chevy Chase*, in the statement that in *The Two Children in the Wood* "there is even a despicable Simplicity in the Verse; and yet," he resumes his praise, "because the Sentiments appear genuine and unaffected, they are able to move the Mind of the most polite Reader with inward Meltings of Humanity and Compassion. The Incidents grow out of the Subject, and are such as *Virgil* himself would have touched upon, had the like Story been told by that divine Poet." There is but one definite comparison with the classics, in the case of the robin redbreast, which he finds to be "just the same Kind of Fiction which one of the greatest *Latin* Poets has made use of upon a parallel Occasion; I mean that Passage in *Horace*, where he describes himself when he was a child, fallen asleep in a desert wood, and covered with Leaves by the Turtle that took pity on him."

Thus Addison held his ground save in the matter of "despicable Simplicity," a judgment apparently not due altogether to inferiority of style in *The Two Children in the Wood* as compared with *Chevy Chase*, but in a measure to a feeling on Addison's part that he had been somewhat too

enthusiastic in his earlier papers. For his main contention, however, he finds support in Lord Dorset and Dryden, both of whom he refers to as taking pleasure in the reading of ballads, and to whom he adds "several of the most refined Writers of our present Age who are of the same Humour."* With all but unshaken confidence, therefore, Addison acknowledges the attacks of his opponents in the parting thrust: "Those only who are endowed with a true Greatness of Soul and Genius can divest themselves of the little Images of Ridicule, and admire Nature in her Simplicity and Nakedness;" the conceited wits cannot even relish works of art, much less those that have only nature to recommend them.†

Shaftesbury, who held the function of the critic in great estimation, did not rate the critics of the time very highly. In his *Miscellaneous Reflections* he sums up the situation thus: "To censure merely what another person writes; to twitch, snap, snub-up or banter; to torture sentences and phrases, turn a few expressions into ridicule, or write what is nowadays called an answer to any piece, is not sufficient to constitute what is properly esteemed a writer or author in due form. For this reason, though there are many answers run abroad, there are few or no critics or satirists."‡ Dennis might perhaps have been numbered with the

* Among them was Thomas Hearne, who writes in his notes, under date of June 8, 1711, that the Earl of Dorset used to read his large collection of ballads with great delight; "and yet he was a man of admirable sense and understanding;" further, that Dr. Aldrich, the dean of Christ Church, had offered a good sum for a collection of such ballads. See *Reliquiae Hearnianae*, ed. Philip Bliss, London, 1869, 3 vols., vol. i, p. 226.

† *The Spectator*, No. 85 (June 7, 1711), pp. 136, 137.

‡ 3d Earl Shaftesbury (A. A. Cooper), *Characteristics of Men, Manners, etc.*, London, 1900, 2 vols., vol. ii, p. 325.

answerers; but he was, at any rate, a man to be reckoned with, and his "little Images of Ridicule," which no doubt won a considerable body of votaries, were put up in all seriousness. Among the banterers, Dr. William Wagstaffe easily takes the first place with his burlesque *Comment upon the History of Tom Thumb* (1711).

The satirical tone of the *Comment* obscures somewhat the writer's actual opinions, but they were probably in general the same as Dennis's. He marvels that in an age so polite many of the best things should pass unobserved. "If we were to apply ourselves," he remarks, "instead of the *Classics*, to the *Study of Ballads* and other ingenious Compositions of that Nature, in such Periods of our Lives, when we are arrived to a Maturity of Judgment, it is impossible to say what Improvement might be made to Wit in general and to the Art of Poetry in Particular." In the library of a school-boy he has pitched upon *Tom Thumb** and *Tom Hickathrift*, and determined to draw them from obscurity. The first of these he has perused with "an infinite Pleasure, and more than ordinary Application," and offers certain observations upon it as "not unworthy the Perusal of the Judicious, and the moral superior to either of those incomparable Poems of *Chevy Chase*, or *The Children in the Wood*." The design was undoubtedly to recommend virtue. Many of the incidents "give an agreeable Delight and Surprise, 'and are such as Virgil himself wou'd have touch'd upon, had the like Story been told by that divine Poet,' viz., His falling into the Pudding-Bowl, and others; which shew the Courage and Constancy, the Intrepidity and Greatness of

* The use of this ballad was possibly suggested by Swift's employment of it in his introduction to *A Tale of a Tub*.

Soul of this little Hero." The critics who cast odium on him for pointing out the beauties of hitherto unknown authors, he rebukes by an unanswerable appeal to authority: "I must tell them this Poem has not been altogether so obscure, but that the most *refined Writers* of this Age have been delighted with the reading of it. Mr. Tho. D'Urfey, I am told, is an Admirer, and Mr. *John Dunton* has been heard to say, more than once, 'He had rather be the Author of it than all his Works.'"

The writer of a Life of Wagstaffe gives an account of the occasion of the *Comment*, which, if it does not actually set forth Wagstaffe's sober opinion of Addison's criticism, at least gives a nearly contemporary view of the whole controversy in the words of the biographer. He finds that the quotations in *Tom Thumb* are "as just and as properly adapted as those in *Chevy Chase*: However, the main thing the Doctor seem'd to have in View in writing this small Piece, was to evince that a Man of quick Parts and ready Wit might sometimes extend his Thoughts on Criticism too far; and if Men of Learning were once to give in to that way of Writing, they might indeed please some Persons of a vulgar and superficial Taste; but the graver part of Mankind, and those of sounder Judgment, would be apt to think they might have employed their Talents after a more useful and instructive manner."*

Wagstaffe's clever parody was so well aimed as to touch Addison pretty near the quick. That he winced under the arrows of his opponents there is evidence in the reprint of *The Spectator*, in which several expressions of the essay on

* W. Wagstaffe, *Miscellaneous Works*, to which is prefixed his Life, London, 1726, the Life, pp. x-xii.

The Two Children in the Wood are modified, and the one reference to Virgil is struck out altogether.*

No further serious criticism of ballads appeared in *The Spectator*; but its pages were by no means thoroughly cleansed of the leaven. Addison illustrates a point by the quotation of the lines from "that excellent old ballad of the *Wanton Wife of Bath*,"

I think, quoth Thomas, Womens Tongues
Of Aspen Leaves are made.†

Steele illuminates a discussion of public taste, as indicated by the effect of a play upon an audience, with a reference to a similar indicative power in popular poetry. "I have heard," he writes, "that a Minister of State in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth* had all Manner of Books and Ballads brought to him, of what kind soever, and took great Notice how much they took with the People; upon which he would, and certainly might, very well judge of their present Dispositions, and the most proper way of applying them according to his own Purposes. What passes on the Stage, and the Reception it meets with from the Audience, is a very useful Instruction of this kind."‡ In another connection, Steele tells of stopping to hear the singing of a new ballad on the street, and of being importuned by a beggar to give him a sixpence to save him from dying of thirst; § circumstances similar to those which later caused Gay, in *Trivia*, to warn against congregating about such sirens.

Dennis, however, was not entirely pacified by the dig-

* *The Spectator*, pp. 136, 137, notes.

† *Ibid.*, No. 247 (December 13, 1711), p. 352.

‡ *Ibid.*, No. 502 (October 6, 1712), p. 715.

§ *Ibid.*, No. 454 (August 11, 1712), p. 650.

nified withdrawal of the ballad defenders from the field. He found occasion, a year later, to rap both of the *Spectator* writers in a review of Addison's *Cato*.^{*} In a lengthy preamble he sets forth an array of considerations which had overcome his diffidence in lifting his pen against the work of so respectable an author; among them, "That ev'n Authors have publish'd their approbation of it, who never before lik'd anything but themselves; That Squire *Ironsides*, † that grave Offspring of ludicrous Ancestors, has appear'd at the Head of them." Against all scruples on his part his friends had urged weighty reasons: that "as for Squire *Ironsides*, he comes of a Race that has been most unfortunate in their Talents for Criticism; That his Grand-father, Squire *Bickerstaff*, who was sometimes entertaining in other things, was almost never in the right when he pretended to judge of Poetry; That his Father, Mr. Spectator, had been so merrily in the wrong, as to take Pains to reconcile us to the old Doggrel of *Chevy Chase* and the *Two Children*, and to put Impotence and Imbecility upon us for Simplicity." It need hardly be said that the review of *Cato*, which follows, is decidedly hostile.

Addison had, on the whole, the worse of the discussion in the general estimation. Few voices were raised in his support, though he probably got a considerable silent vote of approbation. But even genuine admirers of the ballads might not wholly sanction his critical method. This may be seen, at a later time, in the case of Richard Farmer, who assisted Percy with the *Reliques*. In his *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare* (1767), Farmer, after citing testimony in favor

^{*} J. Dennis, *Remarks upon Cato, a Tragedy*, London, 1713.

† A pen-name used by Steele in *The Guardian*.

of Shakespeare's knowledge of ancient literature, takes issue with the methods of some of those who have "supposed themselves able to trace Shakespeare in the writing of the Ancients," and touches upon Addison's ballad criticism by the way. His comments run in part as follows: "Plagiarisms have been discovered in every natural description and every moral sentiment. Indeed by the kind assistance of the various *Excerpta*, *Sententiae*, and *Flores*, this business may be effected with very little expense of time or sagacity; as Addison hath demonstrated in his Comment on *Chevy-chase*, and *Wagstaff* on *Tom Thumb*."*

It is to be noted, however, that Addison was careful to guard against seeming to imply that the author of *Chevy Chase* knowingly imitated classic models; on the contrary, the ballad-writer was directed "in general by the same Kind of Poetical Genius, and by the same Copyings after Nature." How naturally such classic parallels suggested themselves in a classic age may be seen to great advantage in the Danish defenders of the vernacular in the preceding century, who surely had no decided bias toward the ancients, and yet constantly made comparison with Greek and Latin writers in setting forth the excellence of their own language; particularly was this the case with Peder Syv, the stoutest of them all, whose method was, in general, the same as Addison's. It should here be remembered, too, that Gray later found in *Gil Morice* a perfect, though unconscious, exemplification of Aristotle's best rules. The fault of Addison's critics was in holding *Chevy Chase* outside of all possibility of such comparison, and in failing to distinguish between bal-

* Richard Farmer, *An Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare*, Cambridge, 1767, p. 8.

lad and ballad. Addison's weakness, on the other hand, lay in leaning too heavily upon authority for a position otherwise defensible. Aside from this, his criticism was judicious, moderate, timely, and in the long run efficacious toward a more intelligent understanding of the better qualities in the ballads.

Not that the Spectator's own generation was utterly without ideals of poetic simplicity. What those ideals were may be seen in a series of essays on pastoral poetry, published in *The Guardian*.* "An author that would amuse himself by writing pastorals," says the essayist, conjectured variously to have been Steele, Tickell, and Ambrose Philips,† "should form in his fancy a rural scene of perfect ease and tranquillity, where innocence, simplicity, and joy abound." His description of this Arcady, in another passage, contains a good part of the theory of the communal origin of poetry; for "it was a state of ease, innocence, and contentment; where plenty begot pleasure, and pleasure begot singing, and singing begot poetry, and poetry begot pleasure again."‡ The account of the character and accomplishments of this pastoral folk is interesting in view of the opinion put forth seriously, some decades later, that many of the ballads had their origin among the shepherds of the Scottish Border. From the description given, the writer concludes, "we may discover that simplicity is necessary in the character of shepherds. Their minds must be supposed so rude and uncultivated, that nothing but what is plain and unaffected

* *The Guardian* (1713), edition of 1797, 2 vols., vol. i, Nos. 22, 23, 28, 30, 32.

† *Ibid.*, note to No. 22, vol. i, p. 131.

‡ *Ibid.*, No. 22 (April 6, 1713), vol. i, pp. 128, 129.

can come from them. Nevertheless we are not obliged to represent them dull and stupid, since fine spirits were undoubtedly in the world before arts were invented to polish and adorn them.”* The discussion of these principles, elaborated at considerable length, and illustrated by a history of pastoral from Theocritus down, culminates in the exaltation of the English language as preëminently adapted to writing of this kind, and in the fulsome, though not wholly undeserved, praise of the pastorals of Ambrose Philips. A delicate compliment to this poet closes the last essay of the series, an allegory of the first pastor, Amyntas: “His heir was called Theocritus, who left his dominions to Virgil; Virgil left his to his son Spencer; and Spencer was succeeded by his eldest-born Philips.”†

Pope, whose pastorals, with those of Philips, had appeared in the sixth volume of Tonson’s *Miscellanies* (1709), was conspicuously omitted from the genealogy of Amyntas. Though he had before praised Philips’s pieces rather warmly,‡ he now felt moved to cancel this by an ironical essay, purporting to conclude the series in *The Guardian*, in which, under pretense of commending his rival, he really cries up his own wares. He notes particularly Philips’s “beautiful rusticity,” his “proverbs,” and his “elegant dialect, which alone might prove him the eldest born of Spenser, and our only true Arcadian.” After illustrating by the quotation of dialect lines from Spenser, he goes on to say: “But the most beautiful example of this kind that I ever

* *The Guardian* (1713), edition of 1797, 2 vols., No. 23 (April 7, 1713), vol. i, p. 132.

† *Ibid.*, No. 32 (April 17, 1713), vol. i, p. 186.

‡ Letter to H. Cromwell, October 28, 1710, in Pope’s *Works*, ed. Elwin and Courthope, London, 1871–89, 10 vols., vol. vi, p. 106.

met with, is a very valuable piece which I chanced to find among some old manuscripts entitled, A Pastoral Ballad; which I think for its nature and simplicity, may (notwithstanding the modesty of the title) be allowed a perfect pastoral. It is composed in the Somersetshire dialect, and the names such as are proper to the country people. . . . I shall make no apology for inserting some few lines of this excellent piece. Cicily breaks thus into the subject, as she is going a-milking:

“Roger go vetch tha kee, or else tha zun
Will quite be go, bevore c’have half a don.”

Roger says he must go on an errand to the parson’s. Cicily accuses him of favoring the parson’s maid, which he denies, and the thing is represented as ending amicably:

So Roger parted vor to vetch tha kee,
And vor her bucket in went Cicily.*

The whole setting, several turns of expression, and the designation “Pastoral Ballad” suggest a reference to Addison’s criticism.

Whether or not this is a gibe at Addison, there can be little doubt of Pope’s meaning when, in an essay on kindness to animals, he says, “As for robin redbreasts in particular, it is not improbable they owe their security to the old ballad of the Children in the Wood;”† or when he represents “P. P., Clerk of this Parish,” as exercising himself, while a child, “in singing godly ballads, such as *The Lady and Death*, *The Children in the Wood*, and *Chevy Chase*; and not, like other children, in lewd and trivial

* *The Guardian*, No. 40 (April 27, 1713), vol. i, pp. 226 ff.

† *Ibid.*, No. 61 (May 21, 1713), vol. i, p. 363.

ditties;”* or when he makes Martin Scriblerus alter the received text of the *Aeneid*,

Infandum Regina jubes renovare dolorem,

to read,

Infantum regina jubes renovare dolorem,

on the authority of the line in *Chevy Chase*,

The child may rue that is unborn.†

Swift's *Letter of Advice to a Young Poet* (1721) may, perhaps, be regarded as expressing his mind on the entire preceding discussion. He advises his young friend to take up poetry as a profession, because of the narrowness of his circumstances and the great use of poetry to mankind. "It may be your justification," he continues, "and farther encouragement, to consider that history, ancient or modern, cannot furnish you an instance of one person, eminent in any station, who was not in some measure versed in poetry, or at least a well-wisher to the professors of it. Neither would I despair to prove, if legally called thereto, that it is impossible to be a good soldier, divine, or lawyer, or even so much as an eminent bell-man, or ballad-singer, without some taste of poetry, and a competent skill in versification. But I say the less of this, because the renowned Sir Philip Sidney has exhausted the subject before me, in his 'Defence of Poesie,' on which I shall make no other remark but this, that he argues there as if he really believed himself."‡

This ironical opinion, representative of the prevailing

* A. Pope, *Memoirs of P. P.*, *Works*, vol. x, p. 436.

† Pope, *Virgilius Restauratus*, appendix (No. IX) to *The Dunciad*, *Works*, vol. iv, pp. 246, 247. G. A. Aitken, in the *Life and Works of John Arbuthnot*, Oxford, 1892, p. 121, ascribes this to Arbuthnot.

‡ Swift, *Prose Works*, vol. xi, pp. 93, 94.

views of the period, may be regarded as closing a phase of ballad criticism which was largely academic in its considerations. Before proceeding to a review of certain ballad publications, it may be well to look briefly at a few instances of the use of ballad materials in poetry and the drama, in which controversial interests, if they appear at all, are of secondary importance.

In Swift's *Baucis and Philemon* (1711) two hermits come to the home of Baucis and Philemon in Kent, and transform their lowly hut into a beautiful church. The chimney becomes a steeple, the kettle a bell, and even the broad-sides go through a process of consecration, being turned into ensigns such as were often hung in country churches to represent the tribes of Israel.

The ballads, pasted on the wall,
Of Joan of France,* and English Mall,†
Fair Rosamond, and Robin Hood,
The little Children in the Wood,
Now seem'd to look abundance better,
Improved in picture, size, and letter:
And, high in order plac'd, describe
The heraldry of every tribe.‡

Baucis and Philemon, changed into yew-trees, stood in the churchyard until cut down in turn by successive parsons.

The Dean's Reasons for not building at Drapier's Hill, another poem of Swift's, has a mere nod of recognition for an old friend, *Tom Thumb*.§

These cases, interesting as they are, show merely how a

* Originally, "Of Chevy Chase;" see Swift's *Poems*, ed. W. E. Browning, London, 1910, 2 vols., vol. i, p. 65.

† *Mary Ambree*.

‡ Swift, *Poems*, vol. i, pp. 70, 71. § *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 109.

clever poet could use sprigs of popular lore to garnish a salad. Far more zest and variety are to be found in the similar ingredients of Gay's *Shepherd's Week* (1714); here they are a great part of the salad itself. These six pastorals, undertaken in the interest of Pope as a burlesque upon Philips, made a distinct success by their realism, their fun, and their charm. Gay harks back to Spenser, "a Bard of sweetest Memorial." Ballad reminiscences often occur; haunting phrases occasionally strike upon the ear. One of the pastorals, *Wednesday or the Dumps*, has a sequence of impossibilities, which may perhaps be referred to ballad origin. Each division of the poem is followed by the refrain,

My Plaint, ye Lasses, with this Burthen aid,
'Tis hard so true a Damsel dies a Maid.*

In the last pastoral of the series, *Saturday or the Flights*, the ballad receives its full recognition. Susan finds Bowzybeus lying drunk by the wayside,

That *Bowzybeus* who with jocond Tongue,
Ballads and Roundelays and Catches sung.

Cic'ly wakes him with a kiss, and he offers to sing carols for the reapers. First he sings of the secrets of animal nature, of market and fair.

Then sad he sung *the Children in the Wood*.
Ah barb'rous Uncle, stain'd with Infant Blood!
How Blackberrys they pluck'd in Desarts wild
And fearless at the glittering Fauchion smil'd;
Their little Corps the Robin-red-breasts found,
And strow'd with pious Bill the Leaves around.
Ah gentle Birds! if this Verse last so long,
Your Names shall live for ever in my Song.

Again, after a space,

* John Gay, *The Shepherd's Week*, London, 1714, p. 25.

To louder Strains he rais'd his Voice, to tell
 What woeful Wars in *Chevy Chase* befell,
 When *Piercy* drove the *Deer with Hound and Horn*,
Wars to be wept by Children yet unborn!

With untiring energy, and surprising versatility, the singer, "seiz'd with a religious Qualm," gives the one hundredth Psalm; whereupon,

He sung of *Taffey-Welch*, and *Sawney-Scot*,
Lilli-bullero and the *Irish Trot*.
 Why should I tell of *Bateman* or of *Shore*,
 Or *Wantley's Dragon* slain by valiant *Moore*,
 The *Bow'r of Rosamond*, or *Robin Hood*,
 And how the *Grass now grows where Troy Town stood?*⁹

Exhausted by this generous program, Bowzybeus reels on, and falls asleep again on a wheat sheaf.*

The whole presents a very vivid picture of the ballad-singer, and is particularly interesting for the extent of the artist's repertory. Whatever Gay may have thought of the songs enumerated, his lightness of touch redeems any animus that might possibly lurk in the narrative. His opinion of the character of the minstrel, however, was clearly not of the best; of which there is further evidence in his *Trivia* (1716), Book III, *Of Walking the Streets by Night*, where the following passage occurs:

Let not the Ballad-Singer's shrilling Strain
 Amid the Swarm thy list'ning Ear detain:
 Guard well thy Pocket; for these *Syrens* stand,
 To aid the Labours of the diving Hand;
 Confed'rate in the Cheat, they draw the Throng,
 And *Cambrick* Handkerchiefs reward the Song.[†]

* John Gay, *The Shepherd's Week*, London, 1714, pp. 54 ff.

† Gay, *Trivia: or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, London, n.d. [1716], p. 58.

Gay, himself, wrote several ballads; best known, perhaps, is *Molly Mog*. While he thus had an eye mainly to the comic possibilities of popular poetry, the dramatist Rowe found in it more noble uses, and with some boldness employed it for the plot of his tragedy of *Jane Shore* (1713). The play was founded on a mediocre ballad, *The Woeful Lamentation of Jane Shore*. The editor of the *Old Ballads*, who prints it, says in his introductory remarks, "Mr. Rowe seems to have had a great regard to the authority of this old Ballad, and has follow'd it more nearly than any History we have extant."* There can be little doubt that the dramatist was encouraged by Addison's authority in making his choice of plot. At all events, the play succeeded on its own merits, and was frequently acted during the eighteenth century, and afterward.† Its influence in directing attention to the ballads must, therefore, have been far from negligible. The play has an added interest as a precursor to Home's tragedy of *Douglas*, written, some thirty years later, with a basis in *Child Maurice*. Rowe's often quoted reference to his source, in the prologue, is particularly enlightening as an indication, on the one hand, of the current taste, and, on the other, of the author's own diverging opinion. It may bear repetition in this connection:

Let no nice Sir despise our hapless Dame,
Because recording Ballads chaunt her Name;
Those venerable ancient Song-Enditers
Soar'd many a Pitch above our modern Writers:
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Their Words no Shuffling, Double-Meaning knew,
Their Speech was homely, but their Hearts were true.

* *A Collection of Old Ballads*, London, 1723-25, 3 vols., vol. i, p. 147.

† See Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature*, London, 1889, 3 vols., vol. iii, p. 438.

Rowe's synchronizing, in the same connection, Shakespeare's "rough, majestick Force" with those "ancient Song-Enditers" is most noteworthy. It indicates that he might have taken from the great dramatist some suggestion of the use of ballad material for a plot. Of this, however, there is not the least hint in Rowe's edition of Shakespeare (1714).

Pope, Swift, Gay, and other prominent men of the time wrote ballads rather diligently, sometimes in concert. Thus Swift writes to Stella, under date of January 4, 1712, that he has given into the hands of his printer a "ballad made by several hands, I know not by whom. I believe Lord-Treasurer had a finger in it; I added three stanzas; I suppose Dr. Arbuthnot had the greater share." * But the ballad form with these poets was, in the main, merely a convenient vehicle for political, satirical, humorous, and, less often, sentimental uses; they made little effort to catch the tone of the popular ballad; their productions, therefore, give no certain indication of their real views as to this type of poetry in general.

Another of these ballad-makers was Matthew Prior. His attempts are no more, and no less, indicative than those just referred to. *The Viceroy* is a good example of his more imitative manner. He had, however, a large faith in the possibilities of the ballad as poetic material. It may be that he felt, in writing his *Henry and Emma*, as an adaptation of *The Nut-brown Maid*, that he could not love the ballad so much, loved he not something else the more. The probability is that he really admired the old ballad — to use the term frequently applied to the poem — but burned to see what it would effect, "trimmed in the gorgeous Eloquence"

* Swift, *Journal to Stella*, letter xxxviii, *Prose Works*, vol. ii, p. 311.

of Prior. His labors had the effect of taking the characters from their comparatively open native spaces into a genteel drawing-room. The poem, despite its artificiality, gained not a few admirers, and, when all deductions are made, was a distinguished pioneer in ballad "improvement."* It will cross our vision again.

Tickell's *Colin and Lucy* grew more naturally out of a similar desire to ennoble the ballad. Here the poet has taken a suitable theme, the death of a deserted girl on the day of her faithless lover's wedding with another, his remorseful end as the bridal train passes the body reposing by the way, and their burial together. Yet the verses, although in the double ballad stanza, are decked out, however tastefully, with poetical rosemary, and close with the funereal admonition to the "swain forsworn," whoever he may be, to forbear the "hallow'd spot," and to

Remember Colin's dreadful fate
And fear to meet him there.†

The poem, nevertheless, became a general favorite, was translated into Latin by Vincent Bourne, and later drew warm praises from Gray and Goldsmith.

A literary treatment of ballad, in quite another spirit, marks the publication, in Edinburgh, of a poem which was destined to have a curious place in the history of literary imposture, and to serve, in consequence, as a touchstone in ballad criticism throughout the century. This was *Hardyknute, a Fragment*, given out in 1719 as a genuine piece of

* M. Prior, *Poetical Works*, ed. R. B. Johnson, London, 1892, 2 vols., vol. i, pp. 218, 219.

† A. Chalmers, *The Works of the English Poets*, London, 1810, 21 vols., vol. xi, pp. 122, 123.

traditional verse by those concerned in the hoax, some of whom were probably less aware of the real character of the poem than others. It is now generally conceded to have been written by Lady Wardlaw, who tricked it out in antique phraseology, and permitted it to come into circulation through her brother, Sir John Hope Bruce, whose story of the discovery of the original vellum, in an old vault at Dunfermline, received quite general credence.* That it deceived the public in its own day, and for years afterward, was due to the uncertain state of general knowledge of the older language and literature, to the ripe antiquity of the subject,—the defeat of a Norse invader by the Scottish hero and his sons,—and to the forcible and really poetic, though fragmentary, character of the poem. How it found a place in most of the ballad collections of the century, how it was admired by Gray and Thomas Warton, how Pinkerton, sixty years after its first appearance, tried to palm off as traditional a conclusion of his own, and, finally, how the poem gained the early love of Walter Scott makes a story that may best be read in proper sequence.

Before proceeding to an account of the genuine publications of the period, it is of interest at this point to review the outstanding features of Danish criticism, since much of it appears in literary reference and allusion rather than in formal comment. Here the direct connection between British and Scandinavian opinion is not demonstrable; but cer-

* On the whole matter, see David Masson, *Lady Wardlaw and the Baroness Nairne*, in *Edinburgh Sketches and Memories*, London and Edinburgh, 1892, pp. 110 ff. Robert Chambers, in *The Romantic Scottish Ballads*, London and Edinburgh, 1859, expresses a strong suspicion that Lady Wardlaw wrote *Sir Patrick Spence*; see pp. 7, 8. She is credited also with *Gilderoy*. See T. F. Henderson, *Scottish Popular Poetry before Burns*, *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. ix, p. 364.

tain of the writers to be considered were at all events somewhat acquainted with English literature.

This was the case, for one, with Töger Reenberg (1656–1742), whose *Ars Poetica* offers considerable interesting material. The work was ready in 1701, but circulated only in manuscript for a period of years. Aristotle, Horace, and Boileau fill a number of its pages; but the author combines in catholic liberality a high regard for the classics with sincere enthusiasm for the mother tongue and its humbler productions. In this, and more especially in his respect for the ballad, Reenberg is evidently a disciple of Syv.

In his rhymed poetic, Reenberg, after a hearty protest against the bigotry which, in the interest of the vernacular, would crowd Juno and Pallas out of Danish poetry, denies classical bias by launching into an account of the honored past of the ballad in Saxo and the ancient Gothic poets, as well as among the Jews and Greeks. Milton and Vossius may question the necessity for rhyme, but the ear, after all, demands its own. Even the rude numbers of the old ballads have a pleasant ring; and they recite themes as heroic as those of Greece:

*Enhver og med Sandfærdighed
De Kempe-Viser roser,
Hvoraf endeel er prydet med
Poetisk Ord og Gloser.
Med Fabler kunde de saa vist,
Som Grækerland, beskrive,
Hvad Kempe-Mod og Qvinde-List
I Verden kand fulddrive.
Hvad om Achilles siges kand,
Det quæder vore Viser
Om Vidrick, Sigvard, Hildebrand,
Svend Felding, Langbeen Riiser.*

Yet these fine old songs, he complains, are rapidly falling into disrepute:

*Alt dette næsten er forgiæt,
Det som af ædle Fruer
Med Lyst var siunget, er nu slet
Fordömt til Borgestuer.**

Here, again, it should be noted, is a writer who justifies the ballads by Addison's classical method, before Addison, without thereby compromising the integrity of his position.

A pretty instance of Reenberg's fondness for the traditional poems may be cited, finally, from his verses *Til Oberste Werner Parsberg*, inviting him to stand sponsor at the baptism of a daughter of the poet. The dinner will be plain; but there will be a few toasts and some old-fashioned ballad-singing:

*Derhos vi quæder Viiser
Om Axel, Vidrich Verlandsen,
Svendfelding, Langbeen Riiser.
En Ting, om mueligt er, jeg bad,
I vilde mig bönhöre;
Et lystig Sind, et Hierte glad
Til mig I vilde före.†*

Surely, Karen Brahe would have brought a merry heart with her to such a christening.

Jörgen Sorterup, preacher and poet, also continued the Syv tradition in the interest of the vernacular. In his verse funeral oration on the death of Syv (1702)‡ he praises the ballad editor as the one who, in an evil age, had redeemed

* T. Reenberg, *Poetiske Skrifter*, ed. T. Reenberg Teilmann, Copenhagen, 1769, 2 vols., vol. ii, pp. 27-90.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i, pp. 57-62.

‡ J. Sorterup, *Ligprædiken over Peder Syv*, in *Danske Studier*, 1909, pp. 34-50.

the pearls of Danish language and poetry, and deplores the French fashion in the speech and writing of the day. In the *Cacoethes Carminificum* (1701), a satire on poetasters, he shows the same devotion for the mother-tongue.* But it is chiefly for his *Nye Helte-Sange* (1715) that he is to be remembered here. They are manly poems, in good ancient style, on the recent Danish victories over the Swedish arms. The poet aimed to give them not only the form but the spirit of the traditional heroic ballad. In the dedication he anticipates the objections of those who might hold that there have been too many poems of that sort before, and represents their remonstrances as taking the following form :

—Vi har för af dette Slags saa mange /
 At hver en Kierling snart med Sange løber om.
 Kand vore Tiider vel fordrage Kiempe-Vüser ?
 Var det en Minuet, en Fransk Bourrée, var det
 En sponne-ny Concept, (thi sligt er det mand priüser)
 Var det paa Moeden giort / saa var det got og ret.

To which he has the answer ready that there are enough ditties of Phyllis and Chrysyllis ; Danish heroes are to be sung, and they should be sung in the noble measures of the heroes of old :

Hvi skulde vi endnu da ikke Vüser digte /
 For at opmuntres ved til Mandighed og Dyd /
 Nu vi og Kiemper har / som drabelig tör figte
 Og räddes ikke for de stolte Vaabens Lyd ?

In the poems, to which these lines form an introduction, there is rather too much allegory and simile, but otherwise they have the true ring. The first stanza of *Den første*

* Sorterup, *Ret Tak, rar Skiemt, og ram Alvor*, in *Samling af smukke danske Vers og Miscellanea : Sproget til Nytte og Ziir*, Copenhagen, 1742, second edition, Part X, pp. 721-744.

Heldte-Sang om Hans Kongl. Majestäts Kriigs-Floodes Udrustning Anno 1715 may serve as an example of the average style in Sorterup's really significant work :

Kong Frideric sidder paa Axel-hofs Vold |
Og haver et Togg udi Sinde |
Hos Kongen er Kiemper | som tiene for Sold |
Som tiene for Æren at vinde.
*Gud være nu vores Behielper.**

Petter Dass, in Norway, took over the popular tone to a considerable extent in his *Aandelig Tidsfordriv eller Bibelsk Visebog* (printed 1711), and his *Katekismus-Sange* (1714); in both series there are songs in the ballad stanza. The *Nordlands Trompet* (printed 1739), a verse description of scenery and life in the northern district where Dass had his pastoral cure, is also rather popular in style, but less directly reminiscent of the ballad; yet in one instance he refers to Sivard Snarensvend.† His *Norske Dalevise* is mainly descriptive of real life.

Sorterup was surely justified in asking, "Can our day tolerate the old ballads?" For the spirit of the times was little inclined to attend to such relics. This is strongly exemplified in the dominating intellect of the period, Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754). He had travelled widely, and was in thorough sympathy with movements of thought about him. Broad in his interests, and copious in production, he distinguished himself as historian, essayist, and dramatist. Although a great part of his efforts went toward the popu-

* J. Sorterup, *Nye Helte-Sange*, Copenhagen, 1715. *Et utrykt Heltedigt*, in *Danske Samlinger for Hist., Topogr., Pers.- & Litt. hist.*, Copenhagen, vol. iii (1867), p. 227.

† Petter Dass, *Samlede Skrifter*, ed. A. E. Eriksen, Christiania, 1874-77, 3 vols. The reference to Sivard is in vol. i, p. 83.

larization of knowledge, and though he was decidedly national in tendency, he had small appreciation of the traditions of the people. Toward the ballads his attitude was one of consistent ridicule; but his residence in England for a matter of two years, 1706-08, and his frequent mention, in various connections, of English men and English letters, gives no certain evidence that his position was in any way determined from that source.* As a matter of fact, no outside impulse was necessary. The Danish ballad-singer was hardly more respectable than his English brothers of the guild. The new ballads, printed "this year," were usually of no very elevated character. Moreover, the editorship of Vedel and Syv, particularly on its historical side, was sufficiently open to dispassionate criticism. Finally, Holberg's temperament was not such as to make him relish the somewhat protracted recital of the joys and sorrows of Axel and Valborg, or Hagbard and Signe.

The first work of Holberg in which his views find clear expression is the heroicomic poem of *Peder Paars* (1719). In this admirable piece of fooling he recounts how a young artisan set out on a voyage from Kallundborg to Aars to visit his sweetheart, suffered shipwreck, and went through many strange and stirring adventures. The author called it a "Vise;" but its length and general character make it more a burlesque upon the classical epics, and upon the metrical romances, which latter, to judge from some of the titles he mentions in the course of the poem, he included under the term "Vise." In an introductory comment to

* On Holberg's life and work in general, and particularly on his relation to English literature, see O. J. Campbell, Jr., *The Comedies of Holberg* ("Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature," vol. iii), Cambridge, 1914.

the third edition (1720) he explains his intent as follows: "Since the purpose of this work is in part to poke fun at the many silly ballads which pour day by day from the press, the title, as well as the preface, affects a certain simplicity, in order that those who read those ballads so eagerly may be led by the title and the preface to suppose that this book is just as comforting as the ballad of *Axel Thorsen*, and hurriedly to spend their mark for it, and afterward, when they have gone into it a little deeper, to scratch their heads and exchange it for a tale they are better able to understand."*

In the poem itself the love of ballads and romances is fastened upon characters whom Holberg wishes to place in a ridiculous light. Thus when Peder Paars and his companions, by the interference of jealous classical divinities, have been thrown upon a strange island, its inhabitants organize armed resistance against the supposed hostile invaders. Their general, Jens Bloch, the barber, is described as having mastered the intricacies of military science by the study of Curtius on Alexander the Great, the book of Holger the Dane, the exploits of Roland and Oliver, and other standard texts:

*Jens Bloch af Curtio var bleven General /
Af Böger kunde han ey giøre bedre Val /
Han havde ogsaa læst om Keyser Carl den Store /
Iligemaade om Sterck-Odder / som be —
De tydske Kiemper. Ja han Holger danskes Bog
Fast alle Dage med stor Flid igiennemslog.
Om Roland / Boldevin / Oliver / Ferakunde /
Om Buurmand / Anguland / samt Gerin / Janemunde*

* L. Holberg, *Just Justesens Betänkning*, Peder Paars, ed. C. S. Petersen, Copenhagen, 1913, p. 13.

*Hand havde meget læst / saa deraf sees kand /
Man talte uden Grund saa ilde om den Mand.**

Heroic Peder Paars is at length made captive, and is to be placed on trial. But the bailiff's daughter has seen the stranger, and fallen in love with him. Her mother comes weeping to intercede with her husband on behalf of the prisoner. The bailiff, however, is little inclined to listen, and reproaches his wife with being always in tears:

*I var jo druknet fast i Graad forgangen Fest /
For man jer hafde lidt om Axel Thorsen læst.*

Upon which Holberg comments in a note: "From this it may be seen that *Axel Thorsen og Skiön Valborg* is older than commonly supposed, and may serve for the information of such as write the history of literature,"† a thrust at those who placed too great reliance on ballads as historical evidence.

In a later connection the writer pokes fun in an unmistakable tone at the popular romantic stories:

*En Jomfru Gloriant man seer i Baarmands Händer /
Men uformodentlig sig Bladet atter vender /
Hun blir igien forløst ved Holger danskes Haand
Fra samme slemme Giest fra Slaveri og Baand.
Men Holger danske selv gaar fri ? Nej ingenlunde /
Man ham jo bunden seer af Kiempe Ferakunde ;
Man seer til döde dömt den stolte Ridder / men /
Men Roland löser ham af Slaveri igien.‡*

Paars, the unlucky, who himself is represented as having read the ballad of Axel about twenty times, never reaches his heart's desire, for the narrative breaks off abruptly.

In his comedies, most of which were written between 1722 and 1728, Holberg recurs to his aversions on several

* *Peder Paars*, p. 75. † *Ibid.*, p. 114. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

occasions. In *Uden Hoved og Hale*, Leander, Roland, Ovidius, and Haagen dispute about the credibility of various myths and superstitions, among them that of the giant Finn, who was turned into stone on seeking to hinder the erection of the cathedral of Lund. With regard to another reputed miracle, Ovidius insists that it is hardly probable that any one would write about stones raining from heaven, if it were not true. Leander closes the discussion by saying that he has better use for his time than to spend it in old wives' chatter.*

Barselstuen has an amusing scene. Among the friends who gather about the bedside of the convalescent woman to congratulate her on the birth of a daughter, is one Karen, who has brought a book of thirty new German and French ballads, the first of which she offers to sing. Unfortunately, the text is not given.†

In *Jeppé paa Bjerget*, however, a new ballad is offered. Jeppe, after some appreciative remarks on a certain strong drink, asks Jakob if he has heard this ballad:

Liden Kiersten og Hr. Peder, de sad over Bord, Peteheia!

De talte saa meget skjendeligt Ord, Polemeia!

Om Sommeren synger den lystige Står, Pet.!

Fanden ta' Nille, den Akker-Mår, Pol.!

Jeg gik udi grønne Lund, Pet.!

Degnen, det er en Rakkerhund, Pol.! etc.

This burlesque Jeppe says he himself has made, with another "Ballad on Shoemakers."‡

* Holberg, *Komedier*, ed. J. Martensen, Copenhagen, 1897-1909, 13 vols., *Uden Hoved og Hale*, act i, sc. 7, vol. vi, p. 142.

† *Ibid.*, *Barselstuen*, act ii, sc. 14, vol. iv, p. 171.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Jeppé paa Bjerget*, act i, sc. 6, vol. iii, p. 110. For an English translation of *Jeppé paa Bjerget*, see O. J. Campbell, Jr., and F. Schenck, *Comedies by Holberg* ("Scandinavian Classics," vol. i), New York, 1914.

Holberg's attitude toward the ballad, of which further illustration will be given in the next chapter, largely determined general opinion in Denmark during this period, and for some time after. That it was not favorable needs no further emphasis at this point.

While Holberg's opposition was due, in large measure, to the misuse, by some of his predecessors, of these popular survivals as historical evidence, we find ourselves, on returning to take up the thread in England, confronted by a rather conspicuous interest on the part of an historian. The same year which saw the launching of the spurious ballad of *Hardyknute* saw also the publication of the hitherto unprinted older (*A*) version of *The Hunting of the Cheviot*. The editor was Thomas Hearne, whose general interest in the subject has already been noted. In the preface to his edition of *Guilielmi Neubrigensis Historia* he has occasion to quote from the later (*B*) version of the ballad in a discussion of the Wythering or Witherington family, a member of which took part in the battle, and, as the balladist has it,

When his leggs were smitten of,
he fought upon his stumpes.

Hearne presents his new version, which he says he got from an old manuscript communicated to him by a learned friend, in the following words: "In alia Cantilena de eodem proelio, sensu fere eadem sed verbis admodum diversa, *Wytharryngton* & *Wetharryngton* vocatur, ut ex ipsa Cantilena a Collectaneis nostris MSS. jam tandem ad calcem Praefationis hujus in lucem prolata tibi manifeste constabit."* The ballad, as printed in appendix iv to the preface, bears the

* *Guilielmi Neubrigensis Historia sive Chronica Rerum Anglicarum*, libris quinque, ed. T. Hearne, Oxford, 1719, 3 vols., pref., vol. i, p. xxxiv.

title, "The Battle of Otterburn, commonly called Chevy Chase, written by Richard Sheale, and is different from the common one."*

In the same preface Hearne quotes two other ballads: *A Lamentable Ditty, composed upon the Death of Robert Lord Devereux, late Earl of Essex . . . †* and *The Beautiful Shepherdess of Arcadia*, "a new pastoral Song of a courteous young Knight, and a supposed Shepherd's Daughter."‡ The editor does not commit himself at any length upon the character of these pieces; but the very use of such material for illustration, in a sober historical work, is significant of an attitude which must carry a wide influence.

Perhaps this influence, among others, may be seen in *A Collection of Old Ballads*, which appeared in two volumes in 1723, to which a third was added in 1725. This work, commonly attributed to Ambrose Philips, was the first of its kind, aside from the garlands, to be printed in English. According to the editor's statement on the title-page, it was "corrected from the best and most ancient copies extant. With introductions historical, critical, and humorous."

This characterization of the introductions indicates how the publication reflects, in a most curious way, the main phases of the whole preceding controversy. It is historical by its inclusion of a number of historical ballads, and by its approach to historical treatment of the material. It is critical in so far as the editor attempts a reasoned judgment upon the ballads as records of life and as a form of art. It is

* *Guilielmi Neubrigensis Historia sive Chronica Rerum Anglicarum*, libris quinque, ed. T. Hearne, Oxford, 1719, 3 vols., pref., vol. i, pp. lxxxii ff.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. lviii. A ballad under this title is printed in the *Old Ballads* (1723-25).

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. lxx.

humorous in that it contains a number of merry pieces, but particularly in that the attitude of the editor throughout is one of ironical levity, real or assumed.

This disingenuous point of view must surely be accounted for as a result of the unsettled state in which the *Chevy Chase* discussion had left the public mind. The editor, like many of his contemporaries, did not know just how to regard these waifs, and therefore took a position which was perfectly safe, because perfectly non-committal. That he did not choose to let his right hand know what his left hand was doing is clear enough from expressions he uses in relating his labors to the earlier English tradition. "There are many who perhaps will think it ridiculous enough," he writes, in the preface to the second volume, "to enter seriously into a Dissertation upon Ballads; and therefore I shall say as little as I possibly can." Then, after some comments on the purity of language in the ballads, he continues, "I cannot but observe here, that when the great Sir Philip Sidney commends the old Song of *Chevy Chase*, his commendation is in a much ruder Stile than the Ballad itself."^{*} In a more sarcastic mood he pays his compliments to *The Spectator*. Differing from Addison's view that the ballad poet did not propose to himself, in writing *Chevy Chase*, an imitation of Virgil, he stoutly maintains "that the Authors of this Song, and of several in this and the former Volume, were perfectly acquainted with the Ancients, whose Thoughts they do not only borrow, but sometimes their very expressions."[†] Yet he fleers at the critics of the other camp, as well. In his introduction to the *Pedigree, Education, and Marriage of Robin*

^{*} *A Collection of Old Ballads*, London, 1723-25, 3 vols., vol. ii, pp. vi, vii.

[†] *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. viii.

Hood he says, in connection with a remark on the "leaping and lingering" narrative method: "Our Poets of old scorn'd to curb the Poetick Fire, to give way to dull Rules. They had no tedious Comments upon Aristotle to consult; no Bossu's nor D—nn—s's to guide 'em, or, at least, they had too much Sense to be guided by them."*

While thus an indebtedness to the agitation of the past few years is quite apparent, the collection had absolutely no English prototype. Both in scope and method the work was new. It is tempting, therefore, at this point to speculate on the possibility—remote enough, perhaps—of a connection between the *Old Ballads* and the Vedel-Syv collection of 1695. The English work makes no reference to the Danish, or to any other foreign model. Possible conjecture as to Danish influence upon the English collector must, therefore, rest upon similarity of editorial method, and upon some inference from the assumed editorship of Ambrose Philips.

Vedel and Syv were both perfectly serious, and for this reason there is no difficulty whatever in getting at their real views. They differed from each other in detail and, to some extent, in the special interest with which each approached the subject. Otherwise they were sufficiently at one to permit some generalization on their position. According to their critical utterances, the ballads are of great antiquity, but have come down more or less altered by tradition. They are partly fact, and partly fiction; in the one case they are of value in conveying historical information, and in the other they are still of importance as recording the customs and manners of a past age. At all events, they offer a pleasant pastime, and possess considerable moral utility. Vedel

* *A Collection of Old Ballads*, London, 1723–25, 3 vols., vol. i, pp. 66, 67.

divides his collection into three parts: heroic or legendary ballads, historical ballads, and romantic ballads. Syv has two parts: ballads dealing with royal personages, and those dealing with characters of a lower station—in general the same arrangement as Vedel's. Each number is accompanied by remarks of an historical, philological, or moralizing nature.

The English collection follows, on the whole, a similar order. In each of the three volumes the historical and legendary pieces come first, and then the romantic and the humorous. So far as the editor's jocoseness permits a determination of his views, they are, on broad lines, the same as those of the Danes. As regards the antiquity of ballads in general he says: "I would not be thought to ridicule anything in Sacred Writ, and will therefore pass over in Silence, what I might say of the Times of Moses, Jephthah and David, and go directly amongst the Pagans." Homer, he says, "was nothing more than a blind Ballad-singer." Among other "ballad-writers" he mentions Pindar, Horace, and Anacreon. This parallelism with Hebrew and classical antiquity, unnoticed before, I believe, by any English writer, was a marked feature of both Vedel's and Syv's criticism. Addison's comparisons were of another kind altogether than those of the Danes or of this editor.

On the utility of the ballads, a matter of moment for his entire plea, he has pronounced opinions. "I have known Children," he says, in the preface to the first volume, "who never would have learn'd to read, if they had not took a Delight in poring over *Jane Shore* or *Fair Rosamond*; and several fine Historians are indebted to Historical Ballads for all their Learning. For had not Curiosity and a Desire of

comparing these Poetical Works with ancient Records, first incited them to it, they never would have given themselves the Trouble of diving into History: And in this I have endeavored to make our old Songs still more useful, by the Introductions which I have prefix'd to 'em; and in which I have pointed out what is Fact and what is Fiction."* If this seems to be written in a rather mocking vein, statements to the same purport may be found in the preface to the third volume, in which he says he is writing seriously.

His comment on *Chevy Chase* (*B*) is noteworthy for its harking back to Addison's criticism, for its characteristic interest in the historic background, and for its gentle strain of moralizing: "The Ballad itself was written when the Dissensions of the Barons (who behaved like so many absolute Princes) made our Nation the perpetual Seat of Civil War: And the Design of the Poet was, to shew the Miseries which attend such unhappy Divisions: And this may very well excuse him for departing as much as he has done, from History; and making that which was a national Difference, a private Quarrel."† In some such way he comments on most of the ballads.

Now, it may be argued that, in so far as the editor in these and other cases approaches the general method of the Danish editors, the parallels are only of an accidental nature; that the arrangement and treatment are in each case of a kind that would naturally suggest itself; and that the opinions happen to agree in part because they are more or less obvious in character. The similarity is there, nevertheless, and has its own interest, much or little as it may

* *A Collection of Old Ballads*, London, 1723-25, 3 vols., vol. i, pp. iii-vii.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 110.

indicate with regard to actual contact between the two collections.

The whole matter, however, gains an added importance in connection with the question of the editorship of the *Old Ballads*. Lowndes's *Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature* has the following entry, under "A Collection of Old Ballads: " "This collection is, by Dr. Farmer, ascribed to Ambrose Philips." * No utterance of Farmer's on the subject has come to my knowledge, nor any other positive evidence connecting Philips with the collection; his editorship, however, seems to be pretty generally accepted. A consideration of some value presents itself in the fact that Philips spent a period of time in Denmark, not many years after the appearance of Syv's collection. Swift writes to him, under date of October 30, 1709: "Your coming has spoiled a Letter I had half written to send you to Copenhagen." † Philips's *Poetical Letter from Copenhagen* is dated half a year earlier. ‡ Further, Swift writes to Stella, June 24, 1711, "Stratford and I, and Pastoral Philips, (just come from Denmark,) dined at Ford's to-day." § I have not been able to discover, in the libraries or the diplomatic archives of Copenhagen, any evidence of the nature of Philips's pursuits during his stay in Denmark; but it is not altogether beside possibility that on his visits he may have been informed of the Danish collections, and, assuming his editorship of the *Old Ballads*, have taken hints from

* W. T. Lowndes, *The Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature*, London, 1834, 2 vols., vol. i, p. 101.

† J. Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, London, 1817-58, 8 vols., vol. iv, p. 730.

‡ A. Chalmers, *Works of the English Poets*, vol. xiii, pp. 117, 118.

§ Swift, *Journal*, letter xxv, *Prose Works*, vol. ii, p. 196.

them for this work. Meanwhile, the case must necessarily remain in suspense until further information is at hand.

Apart from these tantalizing questions, however, the *Old Ballads* is of great importance historically as the first garner of traditional verse issued in English. As may be gathered from the quotations already given, the editor does not contribute much of real value to the literary appreciation or the scientific knowledge of the material; but in the historical introductions he aims, at least, at real accuracy, as his citations from Stowe and Holinshed bear witness. He strives, too, more or less consistently for a separation of the true from the false. His emphasis upon nature and simplicity as particular marks of ballad style, and his identification—in one case, at least—of ballad, pastoral, and song, are of interest in view of earlier criticism.*

It is in the texts themselves, apart from all critical appurtenances, that one must look for the real influence of the collection. Though the editor states that he has taken pains "to recover the best and oldest Copies extant,"† very few of the one hundred and fifty-nine numbers in the three volumes are real popular ballads; the most are ballads, indeed, but of the baser sort. Nevertheless, they all helped, in their degree, to popularize this kind of poetry. Particularly interesting, however, from our point of view, are those ballads of a more or less genuinely traditional character which appeared here for the first time in any general collection, though most of them are extant in broadsides of an earlier date. These are *Queen Elizabeth's Champion*, *The Famous Flower of Servingmen*, *Lord Thomas and Fair*

* *A Collection of Old Ballads*, London, 1723-25, 3 vols., vol. i, pp. 43-45.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i, pref., p. 8.

Eleanor, The Suffolk Miracle, Robin Hood and the Bishop, Robin Hood and Allen a Dale, Robin Hood's Golden Prize, Queen Eleanor's Confession, Robin Hood's Wedding, Robin Hood and Little John, Robin Hood and the Tanner, Robin Hood Rescuing Will Stutly, and Sir Andrew Barton. All of these are included in Child's volumes.

While the collection thus is not distinguished as a repository of the best texts, it is historically of great importance in the broadly representative character of the material it gave to the public. What Addison was in the history of literary criticism of the ballad, this editor was in the history of publication. The one said that the ballads were worth reading; the other offered them to the curious to be read. That they actually were read appears from the fact that a third edition was in progress by 1727.

In looking back over the criticism of the period in Great Britain, we find that it was almost exclusively confined to English writers. The tone was overwhelmingly literary; nothing that deserves the name of theory came out of the discussion. Addison frankly judged the ballads as poetry; but his judgment, sound as it was in principle, invoked standards by which the ballads necessarily fell short in his own estimation, and still more in the estimation of his time. Critical and poetical ideals in general, as represented chiefly by Pope, were diametrically opposed to the artlessness of popular verse; for this reason, largely, the critics of Addison were unwilling to judge the ballads on their own ground. Like Holberg, Pope and Swift looked upon the old relics with contempt; their choice of the ballad form for occasional uses had nothing to do with their critical opinions. Gay's lightness of touch in *The Shepherd's Week* represented the easy

raillery of the more indifferent point of view. In Denmark, on the whole, general opinion held more firmly to the old traditions than in Great Britain; of this the sustained vigor of Holberg's opposition would in itself bear witness. While Reenberg's poetics and Sorterup's imitations bore witness to a genuine respect for the old Danish ballads, Prior's treatment of *The Nut-brown Maid* marked the tendency of the more sympathetic school in England to lift the older poetry up to contemporary levels. Rowe's tragedy, on the other hand, was a generous recognition of ballad merits. The division of opinion in general, however, appeared in the enigmatical criticism of the editor of the *Old Ballads*; but he supplied the want of a collection, which Addison and later critics, whether they blessed or banned the ballads, had prepared the reading public to receive. What Danish readers had long possessed, British readers, on their part, thus in a measure gained.

CHAPTER IV

RAMSAY TO OSSIAN: DALIN'S BALLADS TO

HOLBERG'S EPISTLES, 1724-1764

CERTAIN general considerations which have a more or less intimate relation to the subject should be noted at the outset. The rather pronounced interest in antiquities, which had brought valuable materials to light during the preceding century, took firmer and more effective shape by the institution of the Society of Antiquaries in 1718, and resulted in a more diligent and systematic search for the hidden things of the past. Further, while earlier criticism had been confined largely to professed men of letters, the establishment of such periodicals as *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1731), *The Scots Magazine* (1739), *The Monthly Review* (1749), and other critical organs, opened the door to the regular reviewer and to a number of occasional critics who otherwise would have had no convenient way of getting a hearing. The recrudescence of the more literary periodicals, like *The Connoisseur*, *The World*, and *The Rambler*, meant much for criticism in general, and for ballad inquiry in particular. Poetic taste, moreover, underwent a considerable change during this period,—a change due in part, no doubt, to a growing appreciation of older poetry in general, ballads included; but more particularly, to an increasing valuation of the earlier great masters. About the middle of the century Joseph Warton set out to place Pope in a rank distinctly inferior to Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, but just above Dryden. Some twenty-five years before, Thomson accentuated the new order of things by the publication of *The Seasons* (1726-30).

Arbuthnot, in his *History of John Bull* (1727), devotes some space to a recital of the differences which grew up between John and his sister Peg, by reason of John's being constantly favored in the family. The description of the retaliation to which the injured girl was driven is proof conclusive of the gravity of the provocation: "She had life and spirit in abundance, and knew when she was ill-used: now and then she would seize upon John's commons, snatch a leg of a pullet, or a bit of good beef, for which they were sure to go to fisticuffs."*

This allegory, by some little stretching, may be made to serve as an illustration of the situation in balladry at the time when Allan Ramsay came forward with his two collections. To be sure, there were no violent recriminations, as at a later day, between Scottish editors and English. Yet the recent activities in the South must have had a stimulating effect in the North. Watson's collection had come as a sort of counter to the *Pills*. Though Ramsay had published an edition of *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, and a little book of *Scots Songs* in 1718, it would seem as if, in *The Evergreen* and in *The Tea-Table Miscellany* of 1724, he tempted comparison with the *Old Ballads* published the year before. At all events, there is a decidedly national note in the preface to *The Evergreen*: "When these good old Bards wrote, we had not yet made use of imported Trimming upon our Cloaths, nor of foreign Embroidery in our Writings. Their Poetry is the Product of their own Country, not pilfered and spoiled in the Transportation from abroad: Their Images are native, and their Landskips domestick;

* John Arbuthnot, *Life and Works*, ed. C. A. Aitken, Oxford, 1892, p. 234.

copied from those Fields and Meadows we every Day behold." *

The Evergreen is described on the title-page as a "Collection of Scots Poems, wrote by the Ingenious before 1600." Most of the material was taken from the manuscript compiled by George Bannatyne in 1568, containing a great number of religious and secular poems. As to his aim in undertaking this work, Ramsay speaks as follows: "I have observed that Readers of the best and most exquisite Discernment frequently complain of our modern Writings, as filled with affected Delicacies and studied Refinements, which they would gladly exchange for that natural Strength of Thought and Simplicity of Stile our Forefathers practiced: To such, I hope, the following Collection of Poems will not be displeasing." † Such an utterance already has a familiar ring; it will be commonplace enough before long. Ramsay comments further on the interest of the material as showing the manners and customs of a past age, and as presenting a novelty in its ancient numbers.

The editor's statements sound promising indeed. In practice, however, he was not solicitous of accuracy; almost invariably he modernized the language; frequently he made other alterations to his own liking. In the ballad of the *Rid Square*, for instance, the *Bannatyne Manuscript* reads:

Because we were not men enough,
He counted us not worth a lowce.

This picturesque expression Ramsay altered to read:

He counted us not worth a Souse.

* Allan Ramsay, *The Evergreen*, Edinburgh, 1724, 2 vols., vol. i, pp. vii, viii.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. vii.

A later stanza of the original runs thus:

Another threw the breikes him bair,
While flatlies to the ground he fell;
Then thought I weill we had lost him thair,
Into my stomach struck a knell.

Besides revising the spelling, Ramsay gave the last line a new reading, probably not more consonant with strict truth:

Into my Heart it struck a Knell.*

Such neglect of critical accuracy, however, does not destroy the value of the work as a collection. The editor was probably not far wrong in proceeding on the assumption that a stricter adherence to the letter might, at this time, have killed the interest he was trying to stimulate. He took little pains to elucidate the text by means of introductions or notes to the individual numbers; his few remarks are mainly lexicographical. *Hardyknute*, embellished by his hand, appears without a word of comment. In the case of *Johnie Armstrong*, for once, he departs from the usual order in explaining how he came by what he regarded as the true version. "This is the true old Ballad," he says, "never printed before. . . . This I copied from a Gentleman's mouth of the name of *Armstrang*, who is the 6th Generation from this *John*. He tells us this was ever esteemed the genuine Ballad, the common one, false."† This, Child's version *C*, is the only genuine popular ballad, by previous definition, in the collection. A version of *The Bat-*

* Allan Ramsay, *The Evergreen*, Edinburgh, 1724, 2 vols., vol. ii, pp. 224ff. Cf. *The Bannatyne Manuscript*, printed for the Hunterian Club (Glasgow), 1896, 4 vols., vol. iv, p. 1097. The piece is printed in an appendix (No. III) as added by a later hand, but before Ramsay used the manuscript.

† *The Evergreen*, vol. ii, p. 190 n.

tle of Harlaw is also given a place. The rest of the material is mainly satirical or humorous.

In the year 1724 Ramsay brought out the first volume of another collection, which is of greater importance in ballad history. This was *The Tea-Table Miscellany, or a Complete Collection of Scots Sangs*. The second volume came out probably in 1725, and the third in 1727. The ninth edition, with an added volume, was published in London in 1740. The work proved its popularity by reaching a twelfth edition in 1763. In the preface the editor says that he himself made verses for about sixty tunes, and that thirty more were done by some ingenious young gentlemen, a statement which leaves the whole matter uncertain enough. "The rest," he continues, "are such old verses as have been done time out of mind, and only wanted to be cleared from the dross of blundering transcribers and printers; such as, *The Gaberlunzie Man*, *Muirland Willy*, etc., that claim their place in our collection, for their merry images of the low character." He prides himself on having kept out "all smut and ribaldry," and sends the work out with the confident farewell: "Now, little book, go your ways; you are to live as long as the Song of *Homer* in Greek and English, and mix your ashes only with the odes of *Horace*."*

As in *The Evergreen*, the editor is chary in expressing any views about the material in the *Miscellany*. He was probably of the opinion that, after the long dearth of song in Scotland, the collection would speak for itself. He makes no attempt at classification, and seldom indicates a distinction between the various kinds of poems. The title designation of "Scots Sangs" covers a great variety of romantic

* *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, ninth edition, London, 1733, 3 vols. in 1, pref.

and merry pieces,* among them a good store of ballad-like songs with refrains, such as *Muirland Willy*, *The Broom of Cowdenknows*, *An thou wert my ain Thing*, *The Blythesome Bridal*, *The Highland Laddie*, and *O'er the Hills and Far Away*. *William and Margaret*, the first stanza of which alone is traditional, appears as an "old Ballad;" the remainder of the poem was written by David Mallet, privately printed in black-letter about 1723, and thereafter included in the first edition of the *Miscellany*. *Rob's Jock* is styled "a very auld Ballat." *Hardyknute*, now grown to forty-two stanzas, is described as "a fragment of an old heroic Ballad." *Hero and Leander*, also, ranks as "an old Ballad."

The later editions, in particular, contained a large proportion of songs that were not in any real sense traditional. But from time to time genuine popular ballads found a place; and these give the collection its peculiar interest for the present purpose. *Sweet William's Ghost*, *Bonnie Barbara Allan*, and *The Gypsy Laddie* came out in 1740. *The Bonny Earl of Murray* followed in 1750. In 1721, Ramsay, anticipating Mallet's method, had used the first stanza of *Bessy Bell and Mary Gray* as the beginning of a song of his own, which later he put into the *Miscellany*. Though the real ballad elements may interest us most, it is not at all certain that they had a correspondingly great importance in the publication at the time. Saintsbury, for example, holds that no single copy of verse deserves "so much credit for setting the eighteenth century back on the road of the true

* In proof of the growth of the collection, it may be stated that, while the fifth edition (1730) had about 160 numbers, the twelfth had more than 450. According to a manuscript note, after the index in J. C. Chalmers's copy of the ninth edition, now in the British Museum, of the 464 numbers in the twelfth edition about 214 are Scottish, and the rest English.

romantic poetry by an easy path, suited to its own tastes and powers," as Mallet's *William and Margaret*.^{*} There can be no question that the entire collection, in spite of its manifest faults, by stimulating the ingathering of stray verse, and by cultivating a taste for it among the generality of readers, did a good work of preparation.

In point of editorial accuracy, to be sure, Ramsay came near deserving Pinkerton's later criticism as stamping "a kind of ludicrous hue on the old Scottish poetry, of which he pretended to be a publisher, that even now is hardly eradicated,"[†] though Pinkerton was by no means the proper person to judge another man's servant in such a matter. As a son of his time Ramsay made no idol of literal fidelity to the traditions that swam into his ken. Further than that, he had enough of the "celestial fire" of the poet to cause him to find easily in alteration and adaptation the better way. Some illustration of his poetic capacities will follow in the consideration of his own lyrics and, particularly, of his pastoral drama, *The Gentle Shepherd*. For the present we may dismiss him in peace with a recollection of his services to Burns.

Meanwhile, lest his grave should remain unmarked, let the reader scan these lines from the hand of a reviewer of a later edition of *The Evergreen*: "These Remains of the antient Scottish Muse, though involved in the obscurity of a Provincial Dialect, rendered still more difficult by time, have nevertheless afforded us much entertainment in the

^{*} G. Saintsbury, *Lesser Verse Writers II*, *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. ix, chap. vi, pp. 185, 186.

[†] John Pinkerton, *Ancient Scottish Poems*, London, 1786, 2 vols., vol. i, p. cxxxiv.

perusal. As in some antique pictures that have been defaced by years, if we can discern a few masterly strokes remaining, we regard them with greater veneration than if the whole were entire, so in these poetic monuments we have observed, with particular pleasure, that energy and simplicity by which many of them are distinguished.”* Among those who paused to read this epitaph may have been Thomas Percy.

The year 1724 was a busy time for the bees of song; for in that year appeared, also, the first edition of a collection called *The Hive*. The fourth edition, “with alterations and additions,” came out in 1732–33, in four volumes, described as “A Collection of the most celebrated Songs.” The work includes Ramsay’s *Bessy Bell and Mary Gray*, but no other ballad material. It is introduced by “A Criticism on Song-Writing by Mr. Phillips; in a Letter to a Lady.” A sentence or two from this treatise will give an idea of the character of the publication, and a contemporary prescription for the kind of poetry it contains. As this compounder of literary simples puts it: “A song is, as it were, a little image in enamel;” and, again, “A song should be conducted like an epigram.”† That these are not ballad ideals is quite apparent.

The next year brought W. Thomson’s *Orpheus Caledonius*, which was published in London in a folio volume. The second edition, in two volumes, with music, appeared in 1733. According to Ramsay, Thomson drew largely upon *The Tea-Table Miscellany* for his material.‡ Whatever the

* *The Monthly Review*, March, 1762, vol. xxvi, p. 188.

† *The Hive*, fourth edition, London, 1732–33, 4 vols., vol. i, pp. vi, vii.

‡ *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, fifth edition, pref., pp. viii, ix.

whole truth may be, there are several familiar titles in the *Orpheus Caledonius*, as, for instance, *Bessy Bell and Mary Gray* (Ramsay's), *The Broom of Cowdenknows*, *William and Margaret*, *The Bonny Earl of Murray*, *Hero and Leander* (the only number called ballad), *Gilderoy*, *The Gaberlunzie Man*, and *Auld Lang Syne*. Some new material, of course, came forth; thus the ballad *Rare Willie drowned in Yarrow, or the Water o Gamrie* appeared here for the first time in print. The collection did good service in popularizing the songs, particularly by the addition of the tunes. It has neither introduction nor notes.

Hardyknute, already several times published, appeared again, separately, in 1740. It is described as "A Fragment. Being the First Canto of an Epick Poem." The anonymous editor, evidently inspired by Addison, supplies it with a laborious commentary and notes, in which he endeavors to place the classic qualities of the poem in a conspicuous light. He modestly puts away the hope of discovering the author or the time of composition, as a fruitless inquiry, but supposes it to be of later date than most of the other poems in *The Evergreen*.^{*} It is quite clear to him, however, that *Hardyknute* has all the most essential qualities of an heroic poem. The author "was undoubtedly blest with a large Portion of the fiery Spirit of Homer;"[†] he had warmed his genius at the fire of the *Iliad*. In accordance with this view, the editor finds a number of parallels

^{*} *Hardyknute* (anon.), London, 1740, Remarks, p. 4. According to Dodsley, who printed the work, the edition was prepared by a young Scots tutor, John Moncrief; see Chalmers's *Life of Ramsay*, in his edition of Ramsay's *Works*, London, 1851, 3 vols., vol. i, p. 27, n. 2. Moncrief was the author of a tragedy called *Aphius*.

[†] *Hardyknute*, Remarks, p. 7.

to passages in Homer, and, in addition, to Virgil, Tasso, Terence, and Dryden. He was probably nearer the truth in discovering in the form of the poem, and in certain details of the narrative, a telling likeness to *Chevy Chase*.

The same comparison suggested itself, no doubt, to a later editor, who brought out *Chevy Chase* and *Hardyknute* together in a small pamphlet, printed in Aberdeen in 1754. The text of *Hardyknute* is the same as that of the edition of 1740; but the "Remarks" are omitted, and only a selection from the notes is given. *Chevy Chase*, on the other hand, is treated with far greater care, being furnished with a preface "endeavoring to prove that the Author intended the Earl of Douglas for his Hero; and notes to some passages of the Poem." These comments sound the tone of national rivalry, already adverted to, with unmistakable clearness.

The text is a variant of the *B* version. The editor begins his discussion of it with a reference to Sidney's, Jonson's, and Addison's opinion of the ballad. With great reluctance he disagrees, however, with Addison's judgment in several important details. If the author favors the Scots, he argues, a Scotsman wrote the poem; but the author does take the Scottish side, and makes Douglas the hero. Percy is presented as being in the wrong, and yet finding in the Scots earl a magnanimous opponent. Addison's reasoning in favor of an English author because the English in the ballad take the field first, and conquer, though outnumbered, the critic finds unwarranted in the Scottish versions. Furthermore, the English readiness in attack only proves them to have been the aggressors; and since, as Addison shows from the last stanza, the purpose of the poet was to point a moral,

quite clearly he could not have intended to give the greater credit to the invaders: "Homer, who founds his poem of the Iliad upon the anger of Achilles, takes care to assign as the cause of it, the injustice done him by Agamemnon. Tho' wicked custom, and the villainy of some writers have agreed to sanctify the encroachments of princes upon the rights of mankind, no man has ever had the boldness to vindicate the usurpation of one private man upon the rights of another." * The editor's foot-notes have a similar trend. Altogether, the argument is interesting for its enthusiastic, and not wholly unwarranted, partiality.

Before leaving publications, as related to criticism, mention should be made of a work which is of importance not so much for what it contains, pertinent to our matter, as for the editor's principles and practice in the treatment of textual material. The book in question is Edward Capell's *Prologues*, which appeared at London in 1760, containing, among other things, *The Notbrowne Mayde*. The dedication of the work to "the right honourable the Lord Willoughby of Parham, a Trustee of the British Museum, Vice-president of the Royal Society, and President of the Society of Antiquaries," is worth noting for its enumeration of the scientific bodies from which such principles might expect to find active support at this time. Their significance for ballad interests is not to be overlooked. In the preface Capell shows a keen sense of his duties by describing, after some remark on "the novelty of the present attempt," his painstaking methods in collating the only texts worth consulting, in recording variant readings, and in noting conjectural emendations. That he concerned himself with other matters

* *Chevy Chase* (and *Hardyknute*), Aberdeen, 1754, pref., p. x.

than mere textual accuracy will appear from his comments on *The Notbrowne Mayde*: "The Ballad was certainly written in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and not sooner: The curious in these matters, who shall conceive a doubt of what is here asserted through remembrance of what he has seen advanc'd by a poet of late days,* is desir'd to look into the works of the great Sir *Thomas More*, and particularly, into a poem that stands at the head of them, and from thence receive conviction; if sameness of rhythms, sameness of orthography, and a very near affinity of words and phrases, be capable of giving it." The ballad and the last of his pieces, Sir John Davies's *Nosce teipsum*, Capell says, "will content the most delicate,"† and all will merit the name of an edition. Such an exemplification of the right principles just as Macpherson's *Fragments* were coming out, and not long before the publication of Percy's *Reliques*, was a sign in due season, not sufficiently heeded.

On returning for a survey of the most conspicuous features in the literary use of ballad materials in this period, we find, as in the matter of published collections, that Scotland takes the more prominent place. It is especially to dramatic works that attention must be turned. Here, again, the editor of *The Evergreen* and *The Tea-Table Miscellany* comes forward at the beginning.

As will be remembered, Ramsay shows in those works no sharp sense of differentiation in classifying his ample store of verse. That he had no clear idea of the ballad as a

* This apparently refers to Prior himself, who, in the 1718 edition of his poems, spoke of the original as written three hundred years before; see *The Poetical Works of Matthew Prior*, ed. R. B. Johnson, London, 1892, 2 vols., vol. i, p. 187 n.

† E. Capell, *Prologues*, London, 1760, pref., pp. v, vi.

distinct type may be seen further in the form and general character of his own *Ballad on Bonny Kate*, written in 1728. The first stanza shows how far he could depart from the popular vein when his quill was pointed for fine writing :

Cease, poets, your cunning devising
Of rhymes that low beauties o'er-rate;
They all, like the stars at the rising
Of Phoebus, must yield to fair Kate.*

He seldom uses the ballad measure in his own lyrics ; now and then, however, as in *O'er the Moor to Maggie*, it appears in eight-line form.

The same stanza is used in several of the songs in his pastoral play, *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725); *I yield, dear lassie, you have won*; and *Were I assured you'd constant prove* are examples. Some thirty songs, or parts of songs, find a place in the play, various measures being represented. Other songs are referred to. This lyric element enhances the fresh charm of the play. There is only enough of the Corydon and Phyllis atmosphere to remove it from the plainness of the common life. *The Gentle Shepherd* must be counted as a strong influence in secularizing the religious temper of the Scots, and in setting free the currents of native song from which greater poets than Ramsay were to drink.

If Ramsay owed any suggestion for his play to England, it is quite possible that he repaid his debt in kind ; for Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (1728) is sufficiently like *The Gentle Shepherd* in general form to indicate borrowing on the part of the later writer. In spirit, of course, the English play is quite at odds with the serenity of the Scottish ; its cynical levity

* Allan Ramsay, *Works*, ed. Chalmers, London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, 1851, 3 vols., vol. ii, pp. 211, 212.

rather betrays later Restoration forbears; and though the opera runs in another vein than *The Shepherd's Week*, the two are allied in serving the author's purpose of burlesque. Gay reveals the intent of *The Beggar's Opera* plainly enough in the introductory dialogue, in which the Beggar explains its purport. "This Piece," he says to the Player, "I own was originally written for the celebrating the Marriage of *James Chanter* and *Moll Lady*, two most excellent Ballad-Singers." Many of the interspersed lyrics are in the ballad stanza, though all are comparatively short. The melodies to which they are set are also, in many cases, well-known ballad tunes, such as *Packington's Pound*, *Lillibullero*, and *Bessy Bell*. The play was well received; but like *The Shepherd's Week*, it ran counter to the author's thought by helping to popularize the lowly poetry which he had small intention of fostering.

No doubt Lillo's dramatization of the ballad of *George Barnwell* (1731) had a similar influence, since, as the story goes, some who brought with them to the play copies of the ballad, intending to scoff, remained to weep.* However this may be, the importance of the piece in the development of domestic tragedy makes its close agreement with the ballad plot, barring certain effective changes by the dramatist, all the more interesting. Percy found a place for the verses among the *Reliques*; and the play was translated from a French version into Swedish in 1767.

Attention must now be turned to a man whose entire relation to the subject was of another character distinctly.

* George Lillo, *The London Merchant or the History of George Barnwell, and Fatal Curiosity*, ed. A. W. Ward, Boston and London, 1906, introd., pp. xi, xii.

This was William Shenstone, landscape architect and poet, who began by writing rather insipid ballad imitations, and closed his amiable Horatian life as a valued collaborator with Percy in the preparation of the *Reliques*.

One of Shenstone's earlier ballads, *The Rape of the Trap*, written in 1737, tells of a rat that devoured a number of books in college rooms, and finally carried off the trap which was set to catch it; the poem has a touch of political satire. *The Princess Elizabeth* represents the feelings of the titular heroine as a prisoner at Woodstock. *Jemmy Dawson* (about 1745), in which the narrative element has a greater part than in the poet's other attempts of this order, recounts the hanging of Jemmy and the spontaneous death of his beloved, Kitty; this ballad appeared later in the *Reliques*. *Nancy of the Vale* is like a smaller edition of the more ambitious performance on which Shenstone's fame largely rests.

This is the *Pastoral Ballad* (1743).^{*} From a letter of Shenstone to his friend Jago it appears that the poet was at first in some doubt as to whether he should call it an elegy or a ballad.[†] The poem, which requires no detailed description, fully justifies the author's quandary in giving it a name. Brooding recollections overshadow the underlying narrative. The pastoral machinery, too, removes the piece from the unobstructed ballad style. Yet Shenstone was quite certainly not striving for a close imitation. Beginning with a respect for ballad simplicity, it seems to have been his aim to superimpose upon it the happy diction and the tender sensibility of the man of feeling; and he was successful, as grace

^{*} W. Shenstone, *Works, in Verse and Prose*, London, 1764-69, 3 vols., vol. i, pp. 189 ff. The other poems mentioned appear in the same volume.

[†] *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 88.

was given him, in laying a smooth lawn of verse, over which the cascade of emotion played not too boisterously. These ideals it will be of importance to have in mind in the later consideration of his share in the formation of Percy's theories and practice.

Goldsmith, something of a balladist himself, could not applaud Shenstone's polished languor. In his *Introductory Criticisms to the Beauties of English Poetry* he dismisses the Leasowes poet very curtly: "These ballads of Mr. Shenstone are chiefly commended for the natural simplicity of the thoughts, and the harmony of the versification. However, they are not excellent in either."*

But the *Pastoral Ballad* was not left unfriended. Johnson, though he dusted the poet's coat vigorously in his *Life of Shenstone*, recognized some admirable things in this work. He regrets, to be sure, that it is a pastoral, and finds the crook and pipe unnecessarily brought forward, but cannot refrain from praising highly the stanza in which the easily remembered lines occur:

So sweetly she bade me adieu,
I thought that she bade me return.†

Neither was the flattery of imitation wanting. It became quite a fashion for poetasters to fall into this way of writing. "The manner of Mr. Shenstone" insured many a poem its little day in the periodicals.‡

In Shenstone's poems it is impossible to trace the influ-

* O. Goldsmith, *Works*, ed. Gibbs, London, 1884-92, 5 vols., vol. v, p. 161.

† S. Johnson, *Works*, ed. Hawkins, etc., London, 1787-88, 14 vols., vol. iv, pp. 214 ff.

‡ For "Two pastoral ballads, wrote in North America, in the manner of Mr. Shenstone," see *The London Magazine*, June and July, 1759, vol. xxviii, pp. 334 and 390.

ence of any individual ballad. As we take up the consideration of John Home's *Douglas*, we not only discover a far more imaginative relation to the material, but we are brought face to face with a most distinguished piece of popular poetry. In this respect, among others, Home's tragedy stands in conspicuous contrast to *Jane Shore* or *George Barnwell*, the predecessors with which comparison naturally suggests itself. Rowe and Lillo found practically an entire plot ready to be thrown into dramatic form. Home, on the contrary, was under the necessity of working back from a given catastrophe to a reconstruction of the whole. In so doing he kept the main features of *Gil Morice*, and added enough glamour and romance for effective stage presentation. The events he placed in the time of the Danish invasions, a circumstance which may be interpreted, without undue violence, as indicating his view of the high antiquity of the ballad. The play was offered to Garrick in 1755, but refused by him. The next year it was produced on an Edinburgh stage, and in London, with decided success, in 1757. The play naturally turned attention to the ballad. Gray's enthusiasm over *Gil Morice* will be discussed in detail in a later connection.*

The instances which have been dwelt upon show that the ballads had made a definite impression on writers, of various tempers and various talents, as suitable material for artistic uses. Meanwhile, of course, the ballad form had been continuously employed in the interest of politics and of occasional humor or sentiment; but these verses, though

* Collins's *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland*, inscribed to Home, shows an appreciation of popular poetry; Chalmers, *The Works of the English Poets*, vol. xiii, pp. 206-208.

of great interest in themselves, lie somewhat outside the domain of this discussion, since in most cases they indicate nothing as to the real opinion of their authors with regard to popular ballads as a class. Some reference will be made to certain of them, however, by way of illustration.

Before going on to survey the more occasional criticism of this period, we may turn to examine the contemporary Scandinavian attitude. It should be noted at the outset that the conflicts between Ancients and Moderns, between the classic and the romantic point of view, which had long agitated the more important European centres of thought, had transplanted their influence during the preceding period to Denmark and Sweden; in the decades now under consideration this development went further in the direction of a more independent native literature. We have seen how in Denmark the vernacular had come to the fore, and how Holberg, in particular, closely in touch with outside affairs, had given the movement significant artistic form. A process very similar to this, though somewhat later, took place in Sweden, tending toward the freeing of letters from the swaddles of the classics. It must not be supposed, however, that this national self-assertion had a narrowly exclusive bearing toward impulses from without. In Denmark, French supremacy was gradually overborne by the weight of German intellectual expansion, fostered by a Germanizing Danish court. Klopstock, to name a telling instance, about the middle of the century found shelter under the fig-tree of a Danish monarch for the writing of his *Messias*. Yet English influence was increasing, particularly toward the close of this period. Richardson's *Pamela* was translated into Danish by Lodde (1743-46), and Pope's *Essay on Man* by Lous

(1759). Periodicals on the model of *The Spectator* gained a footing both in Sweden and in Denmark. Dalin's *Svenska Argus* (1732-34) was an influential pioneer in this field. The *Argus* was later translated into Danish, as was Addison's *Spectator*. Many articles translated from English periodicals appeared in *Bie Kuben* (1754-61) and *Le Traducteur* (1753-57), both published in Copenhagen. Other important names in this category are *Den danske Spectator* (1744-45), *Den patriotiske Tilskuer* (1761-63), and *Den svenska Mercurius* (1755-65). In Sweden, on the whole, French and English thought was in the ascendant.

The literary use of the ballad in Sweden during this period was connected chiefly with a man who held a dominating intellectual position, much like that of Holberg. This was Olof Dalin (1708-1763), historian and court poet; he died with the title von Dalin. While he drew upon both France and England for inspiration, he was probably more dependent on Swift than on any other foreign master. His *Sagan om hästen* (1740), a formative classic in Swedish prose, was modelled after *A Tale of a Tub*. His *Svenska Argus* proves that he knew Addison's work; but he was not able to share the English critic's opinions of the ballads.

To explain Dalin's relation to popular poetry, an item may be inserted here which is also worth mentioning on its own account. In 1737, Erik Julius Björner, a belated follower of Rudbeck, published his *Nordiska kämpadater*, a collection of in part unpublished saga and romance materials, conspicuous among which was the late Old Norse *Frithiof's Saga* subsequently used by Tegnér for his epic of the same name. One of the new pieces was a rhymed romance of *Karl och Grim samt Hjalmar*, which Björner

discovered to be on the identical subject of Syv's ballad of *Liden Grim och Kamper, eller Kämpen af Birtingsland*; but having found a discrepancy in geographical names between the two versions, he proceeds, in his address to the courteous reader, to a careful weighing of authorities for the purpose of determining when the heroes actually lived.*

Now, this sort of thing was not in accord with Dalin's clear historical judgment. He took issue with Biörner's critical method, as with Rudbeck's earlier but still influential views; their reliance on the ballads as substantial evidence he could by no means brook. Dalin's own method in dealing with reputed history as contained in the ballads comes out interestingly in his discussion of the tragic story of Hagbard and Signe in his *Svea rikes historia* (1747-62). His attitude is skeptical throughout. In discussing Worm's criticism of Messenius for localizing the events in Sweden rather than in Denmark, Dalin observes, indeed, that there are more local traditions in Sweden than in Denmark; but their very number militates against dependence upon any of them.†

When, therefore, he adopted the ballad form for satirical and society verse, it was in no wise through any admiration for the kind in general, but through a recognition of the mechanical advantages and other useful possibilities in the type,‡ as illustrated for him by the work of Swift and other English balladists.§ Nor was he an innovator in his own country; for he had an admirable model in Dahlstjerna's *Giöta kämpavisa*, written some years before, in close

* E. J. Biörner, *Nordiska kämphader*, Stockholm, 1737, pp. 13 ff.

† Olof Dalin, *Svea rikes historia*, second edition, Stockholm, 1760-65, 4 vols., vol. i, pp. 351, 352.

‡ Martin Lamm, *Olof Dalin*, Uppsala, 1908, p. 382. § *Ibid.*, p. 384.

imitation of the popular style, on the storming of Narva. Anders Odhel's *Sinclairsvisan* (1738), on the murder of a Swedish envoy returning from Turkey, by a party of Russians, is not in the true ballad style; but it had great political effect, and became universally known. Dalin's work is much nearer the traditional manner.

His first effort was the *Kämpavisa om Herr Henric och Herr Arwid* (1735). The *Hattvisa* is political. Certain heroes save "stolts Sigrid" from the tower in which she has been mewed; but bears come upon the escaping company, the rescuers take fright, and leave the maiden to her fate. Two suitors appear, and dicker for her hand as the meed of succor. A third arrives just in time to save Sigrid from the bears and from the boors, and is rewarded with the wage of courage, wife and kingdom. *Engsövisan* is generally regarded as his best. It is the story of imminent forced marriage, of the passage at arms between the two rivals, and the resultant happiness of the knight with the quickest rapier. The first stanza will illustrate the poet's style:

*Stolts Ingeborg hon var den fagraste mö,
Som nå'nsin gifvit riddare plågor;
Hon uppföddes hos en frände på en ö,
På Engsön vid Mälarens vågor.
Till Hofva är stolt, men Engsön har tusende nöjen.**

A late ballad of courtly adulation is his *Gammal visa öfver konungens och drottningens resa till Loka år 1762*.† Many of Dalin's other lyrics are in a popular tone, though these are seldom modelled on the ballad, but rather on the French chanson. Most of his poems were written before 1745.

* Olof Dalin, *Valda skrifter*, Örebro, 1872, pp. 63-70.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 178-181.

As to Dalin's real opinion of ballads we are not left to inference from his imitations. Toward the close of his life, in 1754, he read before the Royal Academy of Letters a paper on Swedish poetics. In this he gives an historical review of native poetry, in which the Middle Ages receive no great favor. The introduction of rhyme, he finds, had at first an unfortunate influence. This device is good in the hands of an intelligent versifier; but in those early times there were too many who sacrificed to it melody, accent, taste: "Old rhymed chronicles, the metrical history of *Alexander the Great* by Bo Jonson, and a countless mass of ballads and love-songs are evidence enough."*

The political ballad, as written by Dalin, Odhel, and others, had a great vogue in Sweden during the better part of the century, much as in England.† One of the more celebrated was Olof Carelius's *Hönsgrundmans visa* (1751), a sort of tribute to Adolf Fredrik on his accession. We shall have occasion to notice some examples of Bellman's work in this *genre*.

The misuse of ballads by writers like Björner and Rudbeck, which was in great part responsible for Dalin's distaste, was not a fault of the newer school of historians. At least in the case of perhaps the most prominent of them, Sven Lagerbring (1707-87), there was no disposition to magnify the importance of floating traditions. He was a man of sound discernment, whose *Svea rikes historia* (1769-83) is regarded as a model in close scrutiny of sources. As a professor in the University of Lund, from 1742, he gathered

* Dalin, *Korta påminnelser vid svenska skaldekonsten i vår tid*, Kongl. svenska vitterhets akademien, Part I, Stockholm, 1755, p. 106.

† See Isak Fehr, *Den politiska visan*, 1719-72, etc., Uppsala, 1883.

a number of dissertations prepared under his supervision, and published them with the title *Monumenta Scanensia*. They contain various references to Syv's ballads, under the terms "cantilenae" and "odae."* The old antiquarian Herman Chytraeus's dissertation on the *Monumenta praecipua* (1598) of certain Swedish provinces is included among the newer things. This earlier investigator had gone rather far in attempting to connect ballad persons and places with definite localities on the strength of local tradition.† Lagerbring, in discussing an entry in a record of Lund cathedral, referring to one "Tulo miles," compares Chytraeus's report with Syv's ballad of *Tule Vognsen*, and finds that the two do not agree as to locality. Whereupon he adds: "Sed obscuris hisce fabulis diutius immemorari non est opus, cum veritatem ex illis protrahere longe sit difficillimum, et valde incertum, an ad Tulonem, hic [*i.e.*, in the cathedral book] commemoratum, applicari debeant circumstantiae."‡

The Danish antiquarians and historians of the period frequently make mention of places to which certain ballad events are commonly referred. Often their tone is guarded; sometimes it carries a controversial implication as against other writers, who have advanced the rival claims of different localities. Thus Erik Pontoppidan, in his *Marmora Danica*, refers to Vedel's note on the ballad of *Kongens Søn af England* as explaining how, long ago, an English prince was shipwrecked on the Danish coast, and at his rescue caused a votive inscription to be placed in the church at

* S. Lagerbring, *Monumenta Scanensia*, Lund, 1744-51, 2 vols. in one, vol. i, pp. 31 n., 36 n., 66 n.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i, pp. 278-326. ‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, pp. 39, 40 n.

Stabye.* In another case he identifies a certain chapel as the burial place of the heroine of the ballad of *Liden Kirsten*.† In his *Danske Atlas*, to name one or two cases out of many, he discusses the story of Hagbard and Signe, and, in contradistinction to Messenius's localization of the events in the Swedish town of Sigtuna, argues for Sigerst  d in Denmark, near which Hagbard's mound is still shown.‡ He notes further the church in which Sven Felding, a ballad celebrity, is reported to have been buried,§ and the lake where he is said to have watered his horse Blak.|| One more instance of this sort must suffice. Hans de Hofman tells in his *Fundationer* that in a certain parish the ruins of a church are still visible, which is said to have been destroyed because it had been the scene of the murder of the aforementioned Tule Vognsen.¶ Now these are all works of great respectability; and though the writers, as indicated, sometimes express dubiety, in other cases their remarks have the effect of lending credibility to the current fables.

Howbeit, the avenger was nigh. Johannes Gram, a very reputable historian, gave both earlier and later investigators of this tribe matter for serious reflection in his admirable notes to Meursius's seventeenth-century *Historia Danica* (1636). Meursius has a chapter on King Sigarus, the father of Signe of the ballad, in which he argues against

* Pontoppidan, *Marmora Danica*, Copenhagen, 1739-41, 2 vols., vol. ii, p. 83.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 264, 265.

‡ Pontoppidan, *Den danske Atlas*, Copenhagen, 1763-81, 7 vols., vol. iii, pp. 59, 60.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. iv, p. 210 n. || *Ibid.*, p. 476 n.

¶ Hans de Hofman, *Samlinger af Publique og Private Stiftelser, Fundationer, og Gavebreve, som forefindes udi Danmark og Norge*, Copenhagen, 1755-80, 11 vols., vol. iii, p. 21 n.

those who would make Sigarus a Swedish king. Upon which Gram ridicules Messenius for holding Signe to be a Swedish princess, and likewise Worm and Stephanius for disputing the point. "Piget sane," he continues, "videre in rebus nihili doctissimos viros tam serio occupari."* In another connection Meursius tells of a minstrel riding with his noble patron and singing "cantilenam de perfidia Grimaldae." The annotator takes occasion to refer to Vedel's version of the ballad, and marks him as "cetero vir praeclarus, & eruditissimus, sed in istis . . . futile sane labor perfunctus."† Further, he insists that not only the ballad of *Grimild* but a number of others are simply appropriated from the *Heldenbuch*. Grimm, in his *Alddänische Heldenlieder*, cites a similar opinion from Gram, communicated to him by Nyerup in manuscript. In this the Danish historian makes a still more sweeping statement with regard to the German origin of the oldest Danish ballads in Vedel and Syv; those editors, in his opinion, withheld the truth against their better knowledge. "The entire mass of this old woman's twaddle," he declares, "in which, however, there are a few happy strokes, and a good deal that is of value for the illustration of the language, was all thrown together in a Christian age." Grimm brands this as an ignorant view, due to a mistaken apprehension of the nature of folk-songs, and makes a wholesome criticism of the entire matter in the statement that historians are naturally opposed to the ballads, because they are unable to draw from them definite historical facts.‡

* J. Meursius, *Historia Danica*, ed. J. Gram, Florence, 1746, column 612 n.

† *Ibid.*, column 245 n.

‡ W. C. Grimm, *Alddänische Heldenlieder, Balladen und Mürchen*, Heidelberg, 1811, pp. 429 ff., n.

There was one Danish historian, a contemporary of Gram, who fell into neither extreme. This was Jacob Langebek. In 1745 he contributed to the *Danske Magazin* a ballad *Om Greve Christoffer af Oldenburg hans Feide paa Danmark*, introducing it by some remarks on the value of historical ballads in general. He praises Vedel and Syv for having put their collections into print; the ballads are, indeed, to a considerable degree mutilated by tradition; but none the less, they are valuable auxiliaries to the student of history and antiquities, and in certain instances, reliable sources. He offers his new version as an improvement on that printed by Syv. Further, he suggests the desirability of publishing a new collection.*

But the intellectual dictator, Holberg, whom Goldsmith describes as "perhaps one of the most extraordinary personages that has done honour to the present century,"† remained essentially of the same persuasion as in the preceding period. This is the more surprising since in his later years he was increasingly national in spirit, endowing, for example, at Sorø an academy to make "home-keeping youth" of his younger compatriots, who had formerly sought liberal training abroad. From utterances of the patron, covering a wide span in the second quarter of the century, it seems hardly probable that a course in folk-lore won a place in the curriculum. Now to the law and the evidence.

It appears that a Dutch philologist named Burmann, in one of his letters had made a reference to "Joannes Rhodius, licet gente Danus, vir tamen vere doctus et ab omni

* *Danske Magazin*, vol. i, Part VIII, pp. 243 ff.

† Goldsmith, *Works*, ed. Gibbs, vol. iii, p. 488.

fastu paedagogico alienus." This was fair game for Holberg. Adopting as a satirical medium the old ballad story of the Danish champion Holger's feud with Burman, he thrusts home at the supercilious Dutchman. "Seculo, ni fallor, Christiano nono, si fides vetustis habeatur carminibus, gigantem horrendum, nomine Burmannum, prostravit Holgerus Danus. Hodie vero post tot seculorum intercapedinem, novo hastam vibranti Burmanno, novus iterum clypeum objicit Holgerus. . . . Ob injuriam virgini illatam galeam induebat Holgerus antiquus: ob notam vero popularibus praeter meritum inustam stylum acuit novus"—thus runs the introduction in *Holgeri Dani ad Burmann Epistola* (1727). With admirably restrained sarcasm Holberg asks the offending scholar what he should think, if some one were to characterize one of his alumni in terms such as these: "Vir est placidus et modestus, licet formatore morum usus sit Petro Burmanno." Proceeding to a brief account of certain notable features in Danish letters, the writer cautions his addressee not to be irritated if these words should escape him: "Burmannus, licet gente Batavus, gulae tamen satis temperat." The letter closes with a pardonable reference to the strong men of Danish learning, and with the retort courteous: "Vides doctos nos esse posse, licet non multa scribamus." *

In the same collection where this letter appears there is an *Epistola ad Virum Perillustrem*, III (1743), in which the author holds an Olympian "Judicium de gentibus quibusdam Europaeis;" conspicuous among them are the English. "Angli sunt aut Angeli aut Diaboli." With them there is no mediocrity, either moral or intellectual; as regards

* Ludvig Holberg, *Ofuscula Quaedam Latina*, Leipzig, 1737.

learning, they either forswear books utterly or bend over them with watching and fasting, often whetting their wits till they lose them. Abandoning the epigrammatic, Holberg goes on to comment on the great advantage of the composite character of English as a medium for heroic poems. "Nam post Homerum ac Virgilium nemo est, qui Miltonum et Popium in eo scribendi genere assecutus est." Such a judgment goes far to explain his dislike of what he no doubt regarded as the dwarf heroics of Danish balladry. It is not at all improbable that Holberg had read with approval the ballad comment of Pope and his fellows. In fact, Holberg's method of attack is like nothing more than the ironical archery of Pope and Swift. Some remarks on the development of literary taste in England, which he adds soon after, have a further bearing on his point of view, and his quotation of an English writer gives them increased pertinence: "De gustuum mutatione ita loquitur Blackmorus. Olim populares mei avidè legebant fabulas paradoxas de gigantibus, monstris ac equitibus errantibus, mox delectabantur aequivocis, deinde tumida ac ventosa dictione, iterum dulci oratione ac venustis parabolis, et denique solidam eruditionem absque fuco amplexi sunt."* It requires no unusual keenness of vision to read here Holberg's opinion that many of his own people were still in the limbo of giants and knights errant, from which they ought to be delivered to better things.

Ridicule is his constant method of effecting this consummation. Evidence in point may be had from his avowedly moralizing *Epistler* (1748-54), by which he made a distinguished contribution to Danish *Spectator* literature. In the preface, for example, he protests against the affected deli-

* Holberg, *Opusculorum Latinorum, pars altera* (1743), pp. 106-112.

cacy which had demanded expurgation of certain bits from his comedies: "One might suppose that the era of *Axel Thorsen* and *Fair Valborg* was come again, when a young lady either fainted, or pretended to faint, when she heard a spade called a spade."* A reference to the same ballad occurs in similar remarks in one of the epistles.† Another tells amusingly how a certain pope had canonized the ballad worthy, Stærkodder, on the discovery that he had made a bed-pan of four German champions whom he had conquered.‡ This same Stærkodder, Holberg contends in a satire on the antiquarian vagaries of Rudbeck's *Atlantica*, was appropriated by the Grecians and given the name of Hercules.§ Such petty research into the past, to point the moral, has taken much time and strength which should have been devoted to more practical things, and has merely injured the cause of honest antiquarian science.||

The direct bearing of this crusade upon the contemporary production of ballads, as well as upon the surviving affection of the people for the older favorites, appears also in the *Epistles*. A rescript of 1738 had put certain restrictions upon the printers and vendors of ballads. According to a lampoon in the *Anti-Spectator*, a printer's apprentice in this lucrative trade had been actually compelled to leave his calling and turn philosopher.¶ Still there were not a few who preferred ballads of shipwreck, of executions, of conflagrations in China, and the like, to more reputable reading;**

* Holberg, *Epistler*, Copenhagen, 1865-75, 5 vols., vol. i, p. vi.

† *Ibid.*, *Ep.* 249, vol. iii, p. 233. ‡ *Ibid.*, *Ep.* 139, vol. ii, p. 192.

§ *Ibid.*, *Ep.* 193, vol. iii, p. 35. || *Ibid.*, *Ep.* 194, vol. iii, p. 38.

¶ *Anti-Spectator*, No. 31 (December 31, 1744).

** *Den Danske Spectator*, No. 13 (August 7, 1744).

and old women continued to sing them in the smaller streets.* From one of the *Epistles* it appears that a friend of Holberg, concerned at this lawless state of things, asked him to suggest an efficient remedy; but the old poet, wearied with the long struggle, temporizes miserably: the same condition exists in other countries, the common people must have something to amuse themselves with, the printers must turn a penny—honest or not; in short, only one thing is left, to take a census of all printed ballads for the purpose of determining which of them are to be suppressed as offensive to morals and good taste, and which may be allowed to circulate free of the Index.†

There seems to be no reason to doubt that Holberg was more than half serious in making such a proposal. It illustrates how his attitude in the matter was determined by a variety of considerations, historical, literary, and moral. In view of his commanding position, and of the concurrence of influential men both in Denmark and Sweden, the whole period, so far as the Scandinavian countries are concerned, is marked by pretty definite hostility. Both Dalin and Holberg no doubt were acquainted with Addison's criticism,‡ and yet neither of them could take his method of approach. In Britain, to be sure, there had not been that abuse of the ballads which both of these men, with their historical interests, found particularly obnoxious in their own learned writers. But in England and Scotland there was surely as much ground for objection on the score of ethics; this con-

* *Kjöbenhavnske Nye Tidender*, 1740, pp. 260, 261.

† Holberg, *Eph.* 95, vol. ii, pp. 60-62.

‡ On the probable extent of Holberg's acquaintance with *The Spectator* and *The Tatler*, see Campbell's *Comedies of Holberg*, pp. 264 ff.

sideration, however, had not been allowed to gain undue weight against a growing appreciation of ballads as a class. As we return for a review of the occasional Scottish and English criticism during this period we find, curiously enough, the moral issue raised in a manner much like that of Holberg, only with far greater vehemence than his.

This tirade appeared in *The London Magazine* for March, 1735, in which it was reprinted from *The Grub Street Journal* of February 27, in the same year, under the title "Of Ballads, Ballad-singing, etc." The writer begins in unmistakable terms: "The scandalous Practice of *Ballad-singing* is a continual Nursery for Idlers, Whores, and Pick-pockets; a School for Scandal, Smut and Debauchery . . . and ought to be entirely suppressed; or at least reduced to proper Restrictions." Whether or not the ballads come under the stamp act, there is no question that the law regards ballad-singers as vagrants who may be punished by any magistrate. If newspapers pay duty, why should not ballads? Children who are permitted to be familiar with footmen and other domestics hear ballads of *How the young Squire, Master's eldest Son, fell in love with the Chamber-maid, and privately married her at the Fleet; and how his cruel Father turn'd them both out of Doors, and how they went and took an Inn, and got Money as fast as Hops; till at Last the old Gent. died suddenly without a Will, and then his Son got Possession of all, and kept a Coach, and made his Wife, from a C.-m., a great Lady, who bore him Twins for twelve Years together, who all lived to be Justices of the Peace, etc.* By such means young master and miss are taught to love to their hurt.*

* *The London Magazine*, March, 1735, vol. iv, pp. 105, 106.

Some thirty years later a contributor to the same periodical came forward seriously with a project for the maintenance of an elect staff of ballad-singers as moral agents in the community.* It is the old story of the vicissitudes of the minstrel calling.

Such moral ardor as in these two cases is highly exceptional, indeed. Once the men of letters get a hearing again, this high seriousness is no more. A philosophical mind like Hume's can find a justification even for "the most vulgar ballads." Several passages in his *Essays* (1742) speak a language not at all hostile to popular poetry. He holds a brief, in his discussion of *Simplicity and Refinement in Writing*, for a "just mixture" of the two elements; but though the medium is hard to define, "we ought to be more on our guard against the excess of refinement than that of simplicity; and that because the former excess is both less beautiful, and more dangerous than the latter."† Another essay, *Of the Standard of Taste*, is more explicit: "By comparison alone we fix the epithets of praise or blame, and learn how to assign the due degree of each. The most vulgar ballads are not entirely destitute of harmony or nature; and none but a person familiarized to superior beauties would pronounce their numbers harsh, or narration uninteresting."‡ It is a fair inference that Hume found the less vulgar ballads less destitute of harmony or nature; and it may be not inept to recall in this connection that the philosopher was later a close friend of the author of *Douglas*.

* *The London Magazine*, November, 1769, vol. xxxviii, pp. 580, 581.

† David Hume, *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*, London, 1770, Part I, pp. 241 ff.

‡ *Ibid.*, Part I, pp. 301, 302.

Burke is in essential agreement with Hume in holding that "so far as Taste belongs to the imagination, its principle is the same in all men,"* but that "sensibility and judgment, which are the qualities that compose what we commonly call a *Taste*, vary exceedingly in various people."† Later, in the same *Inquiry into . . . the Sublime and Beautiful*, his employment of ballads to illustrate the "Difference between Clearness and Obscurity with regard to the Passions" is distinctly reminiscent of the Scottish writer. A painting, by its clearness, affects only as the reality; verbal description raises an obscure idea, but a stronger emotion. Painting has not much influence on the passions of the common people; "but it is most certain that their passions are very strongly roused by a fanatic preacher, or by the ballads of *Chevy Chase* or the *Children in the Wood*, and by other little popular poems and tales that are current in that rank of life."‡ This, of course, is an echo of Addison, who had put the doctrine of the essential unity of taste in such piquant form in the *Chevy Chase* papers.

To round out this view of aesthetic theories which touch the subject more or less nearly, a passage from another writer on sublimity comes in good stead. Henry Home, in his *Elements of Criticism* (1762), lays down the following rule for attaining the sublime: "To present those parts or circumstances only which make the greatest figure, keeping out of view every thing low or trivial." Homer has done this, but sometimes even he, and Virgil as well, has erred

* Burke, Edmund, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, London, 1801, p. 21.

† *Ibid.*, p. 25.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 84. This passage is the same in the first edition.

in this respect. "To these," continues the critic, "I venture to oppose a passage from an old historical ballad;" whereupon he quotes two stanzas of *Hardyknute*:

Go, little page, tell Hardyknute
That lives on hill so high,
To draw his sword, the dread of foes,
And haste to follow me.

The little page flew swift as dart
Flung from his master's arm.
"Come down, come down, Lord Hardyknute,
And rid your King from harm."*

In his discussion of beauty Home argues for simplicity, since "profuse ornament in painting, gardening, or architecture, as well as in dress or in language, shows a mean or corrupted taste."† His finding simplicity admirable and desirable, and his discovering grandeur in something that he regarded as a ballad, are significant straws in the wind.

Having thus noted in the more broadly aesthetic thought of the period certain general principles by no means unfavorable to a friendly acceptance of popular poetry, we may carry our explorations into the definitely literary criticism that had, in part at least, a basis in these theories. Considerable pertinent material is at hand in the essay periodicals, which at this time were again assuming a decidedly influential position.

An essay on pastoral poetry in *The Rambler* for July 24, 1750 (No. 37), interesting by reason of earlier discussion

* Henry Home, *Elements of Criticism*, seventh edition, Edinburgh, 1788, 2 vols., vol. i, chap. iv, pp. 232-238.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i, chap. iii, pp. 204-206.

on the subject, and more particularly, of Shenstone's exemplification of the principles involved, voices in its way the same cry for nature and simplicity that has just been recorded. Johnson dismisses Strephon and Daphne in summary fashion: "I cannot indeed easily discover why it is thought necessary to refer descriptions of a rural state to remote times, nor can perceive that any writer has consistently preserved the Arcadian manners and sentiments." The only opposing argument he knows, namely that "according to the customs of modern life, it is improbable that shepherds should be capable of harmonious numbers," the essayist sets no great store by. He holds, on the contrary, that "pastoral admits of all ranks of persons, because persons of all ranks inhabit the country." In short, "pastoral has nothing peculiar but its confinement to rural imagery." * Such an opinion, it is quite clear, departs measurably from the views which had produced the pastorals of Pope and Philips, and is a fair criticism upon the Arcadian setting of Shenstone's *Pastoral Ballad*. Aside from its implied defence of modern shepherds, who were soon to be raised to the imputed dignity of ballad-authors, the essay tended to clear away certain prepossessions that stood opposed to the more realistic qualities in poetry, which the ballads, by a growing concurrence of opinion, already possessed.

Even adverse comments, which still occasionally were raised, began to take on a tone of good-humored banter. This spirit clearly marks the essay in *The Rambler* for November 26, 1751 (No. 177), in which the writer tells how, having come up to the London coffee-houses to recuperate

* S. Johnson, *Works*, ed. Hawkins, etc., London, 1787-88, 14 vols., vol. v, pp. 238 ff.

after exhausting travels "over the boundless region of general knowledge," he fell in with a nest of antiquaries. Hirsutus was filled with a passion for old books, Ferratus for old coins. "Cantilenus turned all his thoughts upon old ballads, for he considered them as the genuine records of the national taste. He offered to show me a copy of the *Children in the Wood*, which he firmly believed to be of the first edition, and by the help of which, the text might be freed from several corruptions, if this age of barbarity had any claim to such favours from him."*

In a similar vein, "T. D.," writing in *The World* for November 6, 1755, satirizes upon the history of ballad-singers from Homer down; but he concludes with the consoling thought of the practical side of the matter: "Useless as this profession may seem, it serves to support two others; I mean the worshipful and numerous companies of printers who have no business, and poets who have no genius."† Such random outbursts of fun or vexation, however, did no harm to honest balladry; for its friends were becoming both numerous and influential.

The rapidly reviving interest in Spenser, not seriously denied by the reflections on Diggon's grammar in the *Rambler* essay on pastoral, gained a strong impetus in Thomas Warton's *Observations on the Faerie Queene* (1754). Aside from the general importance of this work in the whole romantic movement, there are some things that concern us more particularly. The mention of the ballad of *King Rynce* in connection with Spenser's story, borrowed from *Sir Tristrem*, of the mantle made of the beards of knights and

* Johnson, *Works*, vol. vii, pp. 215 ff.

† *The World*, a new edition, London, 1789, 4 vols., vol. iii, pp. 261 ff.

the locks of ladies, is one case in point.* A much greater interest attaches to the observer's tracing the plot of *The Merchant of Venice* to the ballad of *Gernutus*. His argument, to be sure, is one of probability. Against anticipated objections he holds that if the ballad drew upon the play, its author would have kept the name of Shylock; while if Shakespeare took his story from the ballad, he would naturally alter the name of the original to one more Jewish. Better taken is the point that *Gernutus* has the "nakedness of an original," and might reasonably be expected to be much more circumstantial in case it had come from the play. "Besides, the first stanza informs us, that the story was taken from some Italian novel. . . . Now we have no translation, I presume, of such a novel into English; if then it be granted that Shakespeare generally took his Italian stories from their English translations, and that the arguments above, concerning the prior antiquity of this ballad, are true, it will follow that Shakespeare copied from this ballad."†

Still Warton is not done with the ballads. The instance that remains to be cited is, if anything, still more precious as a bit of evidence, coming from a critic of unusual insight in matters mediaeval. In the same work, Warton touches upon Milton's reference to

. . . him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,

whereon he is moved to remark: "I cannot omit this opportunity of lamenting, with equal regret, the loss of great part of a noble old Scottish poem, entitled, *Hardyknute*; which exhibits a striking representation of our antient martial

* T. Warton, *Observations on the Faerie Queene*, London, 1754, pp. 19, 20.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 94-98.

manners, that prevail'd before the conveniency and civilities of refin'd life had yet render'd all men fashionably uniform; and lull'd them into that tranquil security, which naturally excludes all those hazardous incidents, and glorious dangers, so suitable to the character and genius of the heroic muse."* The critic had previously committed himself by referring to Hardyknute, "a baron bold," in his *Ode on the Approach of Summer*† (1753).

Warton seems to have been quite right in regarding his conjecture in reference to *Gernutus* as a new discovery. At all events, there is no suggestion of the kind in the editions of Shakespeare known to him, which I have examined. All of these editors, as a matter of fact, touch the ballad materials used by the dramatist in so gingerly a fashion as to betray considerable uncertainty in the matter. Their notes, to be sure, are not voluminous on any subject.

Pope is particularly sparing in comment. He does, indeed, say something in the preface about Shakespeare's depending upon the "Common Suffrage," and following "Old Stories and Vulgar Traditions." He does explain the lines about young Abraham Cupid and King Cophetua (*Romeo and Juliet*, act ii, sc. 2) as "alluding to an old ballad."‡ Finally, he launches the interpretation of the *pons chansons* of the first folio (*Hamlet*, act ii, sc. 7) in connection with the fragments of *Jephthah*, as referring to the "old ballads sung on bridges."§

Theobald is not much more explicit. He calls attention

* T. Warton, *Observations on the Faerie Queene*, London, 1754, pp. 112-114.

† Warton, *Poetical Works*, ed. Mant, Oxford, 1802, 2 vols., vol. ii, pp. 26, 27.

‡ Shakespeare, *Works*, ed. Pope, London, 1723-25, 6 vols., vol. vi, p. 268.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 392.

to another reference to *King Cophetua* in *Love's Labor's Lost*. In his remarks on the lines quoted by the Clown (*All's Well That Ends Well*, act i, sc. 3),

Was this fair face the cause, quoth she,
Why the *Grecians* sacked *Troy*?

he notes "another old ballad" on the same subject in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid of the Mill*. Further, he communicates a suggestion from Warburton that the Clown changed the line,

If one be bad amongst nine good,
for the purpose of satire on women to read,
Among nine bad if one be good.*

Pope and Warburton's edition adds some new observations. The lines concerning *King Stephano* (*The Tempest*, act iv, sc. 5) are explained as carrying a humorous allusion to "an old celebrated Ballad, which begins thus, *King Stephan was a worthy Peer*," and attention is directed to two stanzas of the ballad in *Othello*.† Falstaff's lines (2 *King Henry IV*, act v, sc. 5),

O base Assyrian knight, what is thy news?
Let King Cophetua know the truth thereof,

with Silence's addition,

And Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John,

are attributed to "an old bombast play of *King Cophetua*: of whom, as we learn from Shakespeare, there were ballads too."‡ The passage, "the first row of the *rubrick* will shew

* Shakespeare, *Works*, ed. Theobald, London, 1733, 7 vols., vol. ii, pp. 370-372.

† Shakespeare, *Works*, ed. Pope and Warburton, London, 1747, 8 vols., vol. i, p. 72.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iv, p. 306.

you more," in connection with the *Jephthah* fragments in *Hamlet*, is held to refer to ballads on the mistaken ground that the titles of old ballads were "written in red letters."*

The most significant criticism appears in Warburton's comment on "an old hat, and the humour of forty fancies prickt up in 't for a feather" (*The Taming of the Shrew*, act iii, sc. 3). On this he remarks: "This was some ballad or drollery of that time, which the poet here ridicules, by making *Petruchio* prick it up in his foot-boy's old hat for a feather. His speakers are perpetually quoting scraps and stanzas of old Ballads, and often very obscurely; for, so well are they adapted to the occasion, that they seem of a piece with the rest. In *Shakespeare's* time, the kingdom was overrun with thesedoggrel compositions. And he seems to have born them a very particular grudge. He frequently ridicules both them and their makers with exquisite humour."† Altogether, the criticism of these editors, meagre and imperfect as it was, had a distinct bearing on the whole development; certainly, it stirred the curiosity of young Thomas Percy.

Warton's suggestion with regard to *Gernutus* found almost immediate acceptance. A contributor to *The Connoisseur* for May 16, 1754, takes issue with a contention put forth in a newspaper that the scene between Shylock and Antonio was borrowed "from the 'Life of Pope Sixtus V,' translated from the Italian of Gregory Leti, by the Rev. Mr. Farnworth." He might "perhaps have acquiesced in this notion," if Warton's observations had not fallen in his way. Furthermore, he has discovered the ballad in the Ashmo-

* Shakespeare, *Works*, ed. Pope and Warburton, London, 1747, 8 vols., vol. viii, pp. 173, 174.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 437.

lean Museum, and sends a transcript of it to the editor, with the enthusiastic recommendation, "that it will do you more credit, as a Connoisseur, to draw this hidden treasure into light, than if you had discovered an Otho or a Niger." He calls attention to various circumstances which strengthen Warton's position, in that they show how Shakespeare improved upon his original. "A mere copyist, such as we may suppose a Ballad-maker, would not have given himself the trouble to alter the circumstances, at least he would not have changed them so much for the worse." The ballad appears in full.*

That there was a tendency to judge the older ballads more leniently than the newer appears in an essay on *Professional Ballad-makers in Public Gardens*, which came out in *The Connoisseur* for June 12, 1755. "Ballads," the writer declares, "seem peculiarly adapted to the genius of our people; and are a species of composition in which we are superior to all other nations. Many of our old English songs have in them an affecting simplicity." Cowley, Waller, Roscommon, Rowe, Gay, Prior are mentioned as having left behind them "very elegant ballads." The critic contends that the newer ballad-makers are as "mechanical as a carpenter or a blacksmith" in their methods.† It is instructive to compare with this opinion the view of John Brown, in his *Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music* (1763), that the "modern Song or Canzonette," in part because of an improper separation of music and poetry, has fallen into almost irremediable disrepute. It hardly touches on religion,

* *The Connoisseur*, Newburyport, 1803, 4 vols., vol. i, pp. 108 ff.

† *Ibid.*, vol. iii, pp. 6 ff.

politics, or morals, except in jest. However, some exception must be made for the vulgar, "among whom the *Ballad-Song* commonly retains its *moral* and *political* applications."* With a view to Percy, it may be noted that Brown places the separation "between the offices of Poet and Lyrist" among the Irish bards "in some unrecorded Period."†

We have yet to consider some of the most important critical and literary features that preceded the publication of the *Reliques*; this to the exclusion of Percy's preparatory work, which will be considered in the following chapter.

Gray's characterization of *Gil Morice* came, by his own statement, out of his interest in *Douglas*. The passage in his letter to Mason, written in June, 1757, is a classic which needs no complete quotation. That Gray found in the ballad an unconscious observation of "Aristotle's best rules" is striking enough; but his particular comment on the technique is of a kind hitherto unrecorded among the critics. While earlier admirers of popular poetry contented themselves with general observations on the simplicity and naturalness of it, Gray, with the enthusiasm of the poet and the insight of the critic, notices a structural peculiarity which *Gil Morice* has in common with a number of other ballads, such as *Edward*: "It begins in the fifth act of the play. You may read it two thirds through without guessing what it is about; and yet when you come to the end, it is impossible not to understand the whole story."‡ This is a sort of criticism which is hardly heard again in all the later voluminous ballad discussion of the eighteenth century.

* J. Brown, *Dissertation on . . . Poetry and Music*, London, 1763, p. 199 n.

† *Ibid.*, p. 163.

‡ T. Gray, *Works*, ed. Gosse, London, 1884, 4 vols., vol. ii, p. 316.

The Bard, written in the same year, gave a different expression to what was stirring deeply in the poet's mind at this time. It may not be amiss to recall here that Joseph Warton, on finally fulfilling the promise given in the dedication to the first volume of his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* (1756), placed Pope "next to *Milton* and just above *Dryden*," and closed the review with the words, "he has written nothing in a strain so truly sublime, as the *Bard of Gray*."* In 1759 came Mason's *Caractacus*, inspired by Gray, to turn further attention upon the bards and their poetry.

Gray's translation, in 1761, of two Old Norse poems (published 1768) was of importance not merely in turning attention to ancient verse, but also in giving new dignity to the ballad measure. *The Fatal Sisters*, the original of which Gray found in Torfæus's *Orcades* (1697) and Bartholin's *De Causis Contemptæ . . . Mortis* (1689), is in the ballad stanza, though the accent is trochaic and there is no attempt at imitating ballad peculiarities. *The Descent of Odin*, the Eddic *Vegtamskviða*, which also he took from Bartholin's book, appears partly in a similar form.† Interesting as is this technical aspect of the matter, the great significance of Gray's work for the ballad cause doubtless lay in its more general glorification of the antique and the exotic. The more definitely it appears, as Professor Kittredge has made it appear,‡ that Gray knew very little of the Old Norse language, the greater become the deserts of the Scandinavian

* J. Warton, *Essay on . . . Pope*, London, 1782, 2 vols., vol. ii, p. 411.

† W. L. Phelps, *Selections from the Poetry and Prose of Thomas Gray*, Boston, 1894, pp. 44-50.

‡ G. L. Kittredge, *Gray's Knowledge of Old Norse*, appendix to the introduction in Phelps's *Gray*, pp. xli-l.

mediators in bringing such vital impulses into the English movement; * it was not their first service of the kind, nor their last.

The poet's letter to Walpole (1760?), regarding *Hardyknute* and the "two specimens of Erse poetry," is most significant for its association of a reputed ballad with Macpherson's *Fragments*. That he does not believe, as he says, that "the Poem called 'Hardicanute' (which I always admired and still admire) was the work of somebody that lived a few years ago . . . though it has evidently been retouched in places by some modern hand," seems a little hard to reconcile with his suspicions as to the genuineness of *Ossian*. No doubt he felt that the Erse poetry was too good to be true, since he asks if there is "any more to be had of equal beauty, or at all approaching to it." †

Gray's mingled admiration and incredulity are indicative of the quandary into which Macpherson's translations, to take them at their face value, threw many readers. Blair's unsigned preface to the *Fragments* (1760) categorically affirmed their genuineness as traditions which had come down from a period antedating the establishment of Christianity in Scotland, and suggested the desirability of gathering the uncollected remnants of the Fingal cycle. The translator's protracted journey through the Highlands, and the subsequent publication of *Fingal, an Epic Poem . . . together with several other Poems* (1761), added color to the transaction, though it did not by any means silence the gainsayers. The preface, asserting the intrinsic authenticity of the poems,

* Cf. F. E. Farley, *Scandinavian Influences in the English Romantic Movement*, pp. 34-39.

† T. Gray, *Works*, vol. iii, pp. 45, 46.

and the *Dissertation* concerning the antiquity of the originals, giving an alleged historical background to the events, tended to make the position of both doubters and believers still more insecure. On the one hand, the circumstantial historical setting seemed more than suspicious; on the other hand, the asserted bardic origin and oral tradition appeared not unreasonable. Such a work as Lowth's *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum* (1753) had predicated a similar origin for the odes and pastorals of Hebrew poetry;* and Blackwell's *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735), though the author was unwilling to place "the *Irish* or *Highland Rüners*" on a level with the ancient Aiodos,† really made the beginnings of Greek poetry much the same as Macpherson presupposed for the poetry of the Gaelic bards. The query could not lie far from his readers: Why should not a like condition have existed in primitive Scotland, with like results?

Temora (1763) brought new material, and a more detailed *Dissertation* on the historical aspects involved, yet did not change essentially the complexion of the matter. However, the translator's, or author's, explicit comparisons with Homer in the notes emphasized the comprehensiveness of his defence.

The capstone was put upon the whole by Blair's laborious *Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian* (1763). He found the poems "irregular and unpolished," but full of "that enthusiasm, that vehemence and fire, which are the

* Robert Lowth, *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum*, ed. Michaelis, Göttingen, 1770, pp. 119-122.

† T. Blackwell, *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer*, London, 1735, pp. 111, 112.

soul of poetry.”* *Fingal* has Aristotle’s “Unity of Epic action,”† but it is not to be wondered at that “among the race and succession of bards, one Homer should arise.”‡ Blair’s remarks did not err on the side of faint-heartedness; that their ebulliency was in part due to national prepossession is far from unlikely.

Reference will be made later to various opinions for and against *Ossian*, which cannot be discussed in detail here. The relation of the whole matter to ballad inquiry is rather perplexing. The dubiety of scholars and cultivated minds in general was transplanted to all traditional survivals; no doubt only Percy’s high character warded off other than Ritsonian suspicions of the Folio Manuscript. On the other hand, the agitation served to make criticism more cautious, of which Percy again is a witness. More than this, the Scottish treasure-trove, suspect or not, went far to create a spirit of emulation which enriched the *Reliques*. Altogether, *Ossian* could not but stir up a fresh interest in older poetry, which fell to the benefit of ballad research and appreciation. As an avowedly modern imaginative reconstruction of the past, Macpherson’s poems would have turned the eyes of both poets and antiquaries into unexplored crannies; as a professedly faithful rendering of the song of distant generations, their influence was appreciably heightened. *Ossian* had a remarkable bearing on scholarship and literature also in Denmark and Sweden.

Meanwhile, during the cry and clamor, Evan Evans had published his *Specimens of the Poetry of the Antient Welsh*

* Hugh Blair, in *Poems of Ossian*, ed. Hugh Campbell, London, 1822, 2 vols., vol. ii, p. 232.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 269, 270. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

Bards (1764). Richard Hurd, in quite another manner, had glorified "Gothic" literature in his *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762). His plea for a judgment of this literature on its own ground had a comprehensive sweep which included much that he did not specify. His explaining that the author of *Sir Thopas* did not mean, absolutely and under every form, to condemn this kind of writing, made for a proper discrimination in dealing with romantic material. The *Letters* surely added to the "house of Spenser" many who came to regret with Hurd the revolution of taste which had brought "a great deal of good sense," but had taken away "a world of fine fabling."*

Thus by various means the doors were opened through which the humbler "Gothic" poetry was to find ingress with the more noble. Let prosing lexicographers merge the ballads indiscriminately with the motley crowd of "song,"† or speak of them as "trifling pieces sung about the streets."‡ If we like, we may leave the streets, and listen with the Reverend John Jones to the spirited ballad-singing of his friend, Caleb Parnham, the rector of Ufford: "How well did he chant that humorous song of Matt Prior on the *Master of Wimpole!* All was attention and delight in Mr. Bonfof's parlour when he sung this, and the ballad of *Chevy Chase*."§ Bonfof, a happy omen! How the rafters of good Mr. Bonfof's parlor must have rung again the next year,

* R. Hurd, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, London, 1762, p. 120. Percy wrote to Farmer, September 9, 1762, mentioning Hurd's *Letters* and Warton's *Observations* with great respect, and stating his belief that these works would prepare for his own. See *Percy-Farmer Correspondence*, Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 28222, pp. 7, 8.

† Johnson's *Dictionary*. ‡ *Universal Dictionary*, Edinburgh, 1763.

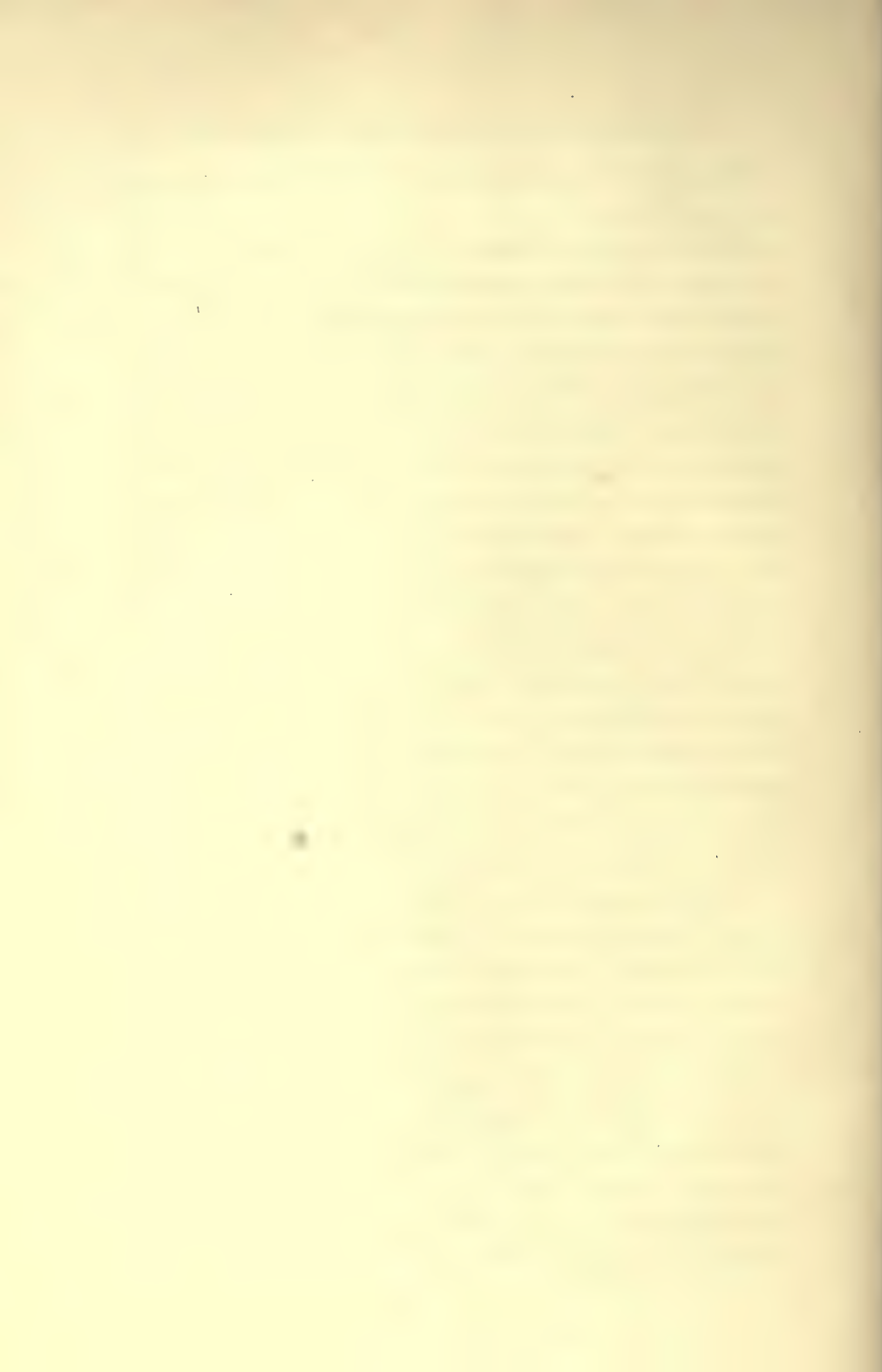
§ J. Jones, MS. of 1764, in Nichols's *Anecdotes*, add. to vol. i, vol. viii, p. 378.

when the rector had got a new book of ballads from brother Percy!

The predominance of Scottish interest in popular poetry during this period is particularly noticeable in the publication of collections such as Ramsay's and Thomson's. The twelve editions of *The Tea-Table Miscellany* bear witness to the strength of the demand for verse of this kind. Ramsay's work, to be sure, left much to be desired from a critical point of view. The scientific treatment of ballad texts was not yet looked upon as necessary, or even desirable; and the capacity for such treatment was still relatively small. This incompetence was strikingly disclosed by the success of the *Hardyknute* hoax perpetrated in the foregoing period, and was attested particularly by the later serious commentary on the poem, and by the enthusiastic acceptance of it by a scholar like Warton. The discussion of the ballads was, on the whole, not theoretical but aesthetic and literary, much as in the first quarter of the century. No new voice was lifted to speak with the authority of an Addison, but his influence no doubt contributed much toward the change which gradually came over the tone of criticism. Although *The Spectator* soon had a numerous progeny in Denmark and Sweden, there seems to be no evidence that Addison's attitude toward popular poetry moved even the favorable critics in those countries; rather more noticeable is the influence of Addison's opponents. Yet the Scandinavian historians still clung reverently to the old traditions. Representative men of letters like Dalin and Holberg, seeking to establish a modern national literature in Sweden and in Denmark, looked upon the ballads as old lumber to be swept away, while contemporary English and Scottish writ-

ers were seeing in them more than before new uses in the service of literature.

With *The Seasons* a breath of country freshness had blown over poetry. Shenstone combined an interest in nature with a poetic interest in the ballads. Home's *Douglas* and Lillo's *George Barnwell* added significant testimony to the possibilities of popular themes for dramatic composition. Incidentally, *Douglas* drew from Gray, whose exotic predilections, not least as expressed in his Norse odes, were of the utmost importance in general, the first notable piece of technical ballad criticism. Aesthetic writers like Hume and Burke, it is true, gave the ballads only a passing recognition. On the whole, little comment actually unfavorable arose from any quarter. Some light raillery there was, indeed, but with none of the animus of a Dennis. On the other hand, a new positive development of a most fruitful kind took place. While Addison had compared the ballads with the ancient classics, men like Warton, Hurd, and the editors of Shakespeare revealed the intimate connection between popular poetry and the English classics. This was the most significant critical work of the period, and was of great value to Percy. Macpherson's publications no doubt counted strongly for Percy, and for balladry in general, in both Britain and Scandinavia, by the antique color of the poetry, and by its alluring suggestion of vast fields of tradition to be explored by textual research and mapped by criticism. The fulness of time had come for the appearance of the *Reliques*, from which British and Scandinavian poetry in turn were to draw new life. The importance of Percy's entire work for the later Scandinavian revival, aside from his own interest in Norse subjects, can hardly be too strongly emphasized.



CHAPTER V

PERCY, 1758-1801

IN order to form an impression of how Percy was affected by the critical and literary movements sketched in the foregoing pages, and of how his interests unfolded themselves particularly in the preparation of the *Reliques*, it will be necessary to go back some years to a period considerably before the publication of his collection. The preservation of a respectable body of his correspondence from this time, and of the communications of others bearing on the subject, makes it possible to trace in some detail his methods of work and the development of his views.

Reference has already been made to Shenstone's relation to Percy in this matter. As the records show, the two were in frequent touch with each other on ballad questions for half a dozen years before the poet's death in 1763. There can be no doubt that the older man had a very real influence in shaping the opinions of the younger, an influence second to none.

Some months after the production of *Douglas* in London, Percy writes to Shenstone, November 24, 1757, referring to *Gil Morice*, which Shenstone had read to him, and telling him of a version in a manuscript in his possession, which Johnson has been urging him to publish.* Shenstone answers, January 4, 1758: "You pique my curiosity extremely by the mention of that antient Ms., as there is nothing gives me greater Pleasure than the Simplicity of style and senti-

* Hans Hecht, *Thomas Percy und William Shenstone, Ein Brief-Wechsel aus der Entstehungszeit der Reliques, Quellen und Forschungen*, ciii, 1909, p. 5.

ment that is observable in old English ballads.”* Here are the earliest references I have seen to the Folio Manuscript, which must have been several years in Percy’s possession, and which was to be such a bone of contention throughout the century. It formed the basis of much of the subsequent correspondence between the two.

In the same letter Shenstone communicates some stanzas of a version of the ballad in his possession, which he suggests should take the place of others in Percy’s version. Only a few lines need be quoted to show the quality of the proffered verses. Here is part of the description of Gil Morice:

His hair was like the threads of gold
Shot frae the burning Sun,
His lips like roses dropping dew,
His breath was a perfume.†

Percy, in his answer of January 9, 1758, is very grateful for the opportunity of comparing the two versions, which he discovers to differ in “a surprising Manner; scarcely two Lines are found alike.” With becoming deference to superior judgment he adds: “Mine is in general but a poor imperfect Fragment compared with yours.”‡ Later he gives a suggestion of the process of improvement which was to be a constant subject of the correspondence: “I can think of no rhyme for *Sun*, in the 14th stanza of the Additions to Gill Morrice—but what if you find one for *perfume lin. ult.*

* Hans Hecht, *Thomas Percy und William Shenstone, Ein Brief-Wechsel aus der Entstehungszeit der Reliques, Quellen und Forschungen*, ciii, 1909, p. 6.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 8.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 8. Hecht notes in his *Anmerkungen*, p. 96, that the substitute stanzas, in a more denatured form, were adopted in the version of *Gil Morice* printed in the *Reliques*.

Query? threads of Gold drawn from Minerva's loom—or something infinitely better.”*

An entry in Percy's *Memoranda* of February 11, 1759, shows how little definite was his idea of ballad at this time. It refers to a “List of the Old Ballads communicated to Mr. Shenstone. The 2 Pilgrimages to Walsingham. The Boy & Mantle. [One undeciphered title.] The Marriage of Sir Gawaine. Col. Lovelace's Song. Chloris, etc.”†

Meanwhile, his collaborator at Leasowes had been busy in retouching and transcribing *The Gentle Herdsman* and *Edom of Gordon*; but in writing to Percy to tell him of it, he says, with laudable zeal: “Your supplemental Stanzas must undoubtedly approach nearer to what was the original Reading.”‡ He declines to submit his results, intending to bring them in person. This letter of June 6, 1759, Percy answers on August 3, promising to show his expected visitor the “old Folio Volume of ancient ballads,” and entreating to see the “Improvements of *Edom of Gordon*, the *Gentle Herdsman*, etc.”§ To which Shenstone, with the modesty of the conscientious emender, replies, October 3, 1759: “Edom of Gordon, of which you desire a Copy, must receive great alteration towards the Close, before I can *endure* that you should see it.”|| Further scruples manifest themselves in a later communication, under date of February 15, 1760: “The old Ballads I pretended to adjust cannot possibly appear with my consent. . . . They

* Hans Hecht, *Thomas Percy und William Shenstone*, p. 13.

† Percy, *Memoranda* (1753-1811), Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 32336, 32337, 2 vols., vol. i, p. 18 verso.

‡ Thomas Hull, *Select Letters*, London, 1778, 2 vols., vol. i, p. 261.

§ Hecht, *Thomas Percy und William Shenstone*, p. 21.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 24.

are corrected indeed, but that in a manner so very contrary to my present Sentiments, that I cannot endure to transcribe them as they are.”* That these qualms were not due to a change of heart toward a greater veneration for the received text will be clear before long.

As time went on new recruits were enlisted in the enterprise. March 1, 1761, Shenstone writes to Graves and tells him of Percy's project; incidentally, he throws some light behind the scenes by confessing his own part in the business: “I proposed the scheme for him *myself*, wishing to see an elegant *edition* and good collection of this kind.”† The word “elegant” had already begun to take on a significance of its own in this matter.

Shenstone, in the meantime, had been giving some thought to the critical details of the forthcoming work. In a letter of April 24, regarding the plan of the book, he asks Percy, “Do you make any distinction betwixt a Ballad and a Song, and so confine yourself to the *Former*?” His own distinction, given immediately after, is the first actual definition of the term that I have encountered. “With the common people,” he interestingly observes, “I believe, a Song becomes a ballad as it grows in years, as they think an old serpent becomes a Dragon, or an old justice a Justice of Quorum. For my own part, I who love by means of different words to bundle up distinct Ideas, am apt to consider a Ballad as containing some little story, either real or invented. Perhaps my notion may be too contracted, yet, be this as it will, it may not be of much Importance to consult Etymology on this occasion, as it will be necessary

* Hecht, *Thomas Percy und William Shenstone*, p. 30.

† Shenstone, *Works*, vol. iii, p. 363.

herein to follow the ordinary opinion of the world, at Last.”* This closing remark goes far to explain how the *Reliques* came to be made in more respects than one a concession to the “ordinary opinion of the world.”

As for the definition itself, Shenstone comes back to it in a letter relating to two original ballads which Hull had sent him with a view to their inclusion in Percy’s collection. The communication is not dated, but is placed by Hull himself immediately after one of October 18, 1761. Shenstone gives his definition in much the same words as before, but adds to it a description of a song: “It is become habitual to me, to call *that* a *Ballad*, which describes or implies some *Action*; on the other Hand, I term that a *Song*, which contains only an *Expression of Sentiment*.” The two submitted poems, which are printed with the letter, justify the critic’s distinction fully. The second, called by him a song, is merely the lyric cry of a deceived girl; the first, admitted by him to be a ballad, is on a subject identical with that of *Bonny Barbara Allen*.† Thus we find Shenstone throwing out in set words a definition of ballad, which, if not quite specific enough as to the narrative method, is in other respects accurate and serviceable.

Percy, on the other hand, seems not to have answered his correspondent’s request by offering a distinction of his own. At any rate, the letter which seems to have been a reply, written May 22, speaks only indefinitely of “pieces,” “ditties,” and “Love Songs.” His disposition of the question may perhaps be seen in these words: “My Collection shall be promiscuous, yet so distributed that the pieces shall

* Hecht, *Thomas Percy und William Shenstone*, p. 52.

† Hull, *Select Letters*, vol. ii, pp. 135 ff.

if possible illustrate each other. . . . I shall make Dodsley's Collection of Old Plays so far my model, as not easily to admit any pieces written since the Restoration; yet on the other hand I shall not totally exclude a few good ones that have been written since that time in imitation of them. . . . The best ancient Scottish pieces I shall readily admit, and the modern ones under the same restrictions as the above."*

So far as I have been able to learn, he never drew up a ballad formula.

A letter from Shenstone to MacGowan, of September 24, 1761, communicated to Percy, on the eve of his death, by Robert Anderson, is important for the information it gives on Percy's methods of work, on Shenstone's part in the promotion of the *Reliques*, and on Shenstone's views upon the subject in general. The writer begins by expressing satisfaction with certain Erse fragments submitted to him, and specifically with the alterations made by the translator, upon which he adds: "I do not in the least disapprove of this; knowing by experience that trivial amendments in these old compositions often render them highly striking, which would be otherwise quite neglected. . . .

"It seems to be a very favorable era for the appearance of such irregular poetry. The taste of the age, so far as it regards plan and style, seems to have been carried to its utmost height, as may appear in the works of Akenside, Gray's Odes and Churchyard Verses, and Mason's Monody and Elfrida. The public has seen all that art can do, and they want the more striking effects of wild, original, enthusiastic genius." This from the aging author of the *Pastoral Ballad* shows sufficient plasticity of mind.

* Hecht, *Thomas Percy und William Shenstone*, pp. 53, 54.

He goes on to tell MacGowan of Percy's work, and asks for ballads to further the project. Whereupon he remarks significantly: "I am only afraid that his fondness for antiquity should tempt him to admit pieces that have no other sort of merit. However, he has offered me a rejecting power, of which I mean to make considerable use. He is encouraged in his undertaking by Samuel Johnson, Garrick, and many persons of note, who lend him such assistance as is within their power."*

In pursuance of his fears, he writes a few weeks later to Percy, October, 1761, advising him "to defer the publication of such old Pieces as have rather more merit in the light of *Curiosity* than *Poetry* (such as the tragick one of 'the Fight at Otterbourne' and the comick one of 'John the Reeve') till you have experienced the Publick's reception of the two First Vols."†

Meanwhile, Percy had been going energetically about his intention to "ransack the whole British Empire." Besides enlisting others in the search, he had been busy a good part of the summer in transcribing ballads in London and elsewhere from the Pepys Collection and other sources.‡

October 27-30, 1761, Percy visited Shenstone, during which time he was employed in working on his ballads.§ Not long afterward, February 3, 1762, Shenstone sums up strikingly the results that have come out of their deliberations thus far as follows: "I ever considered your old Mss. as the noblest treasure in a *Poet's hands* . . . if you publish

* *Nichols's Illustrations*, vol. vii, pp. 220, 221. MacGowan finally supplied Percy with a few Scottish ballads.

† Hecht, *Thomas Percy und William Shenstone*, p. 66.

‡ Percy, *Memoranda*, vol. i, pp. 29 verso ff.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 34 verso.

these old pieces *unimproved* only, I consider them as not every one's money, but as a prize merely for either *virtuoso*s, or else the *manufacturers* in this kind of ware: the Poets namely. . . . If you consider *improved* Copies as the *standard* or *principal* ones, and give them a first place, I do not see that you need hereby violate your purpose of arranging according to the date. They may still rank as old Barons, let the robes they wear be ever so modern."*

The rest of Shenstone's letters, the last of which to Percy is dated January 16, 1763, touch frequently on ballad matters; but they do not offer anything essentially new in criticism. On February 11 following, Shenstone died.

These citations give a fair view of the poet's ballad theory and his editorial principles. They show also that he brought his ideas to Percy's attention with unmistakable distinctness. Percy, so far as his expressions warrant a conclusion in the matter, acquiesced fully in the older man's opinions. As to ballad definition, he did not commit himself; as to the proper treatment of the ballads for publication, he was to all intents and purposes quite at one with Shenstone in regard to the propriety of giving the old barons new robes. Since the relations of the two were so close during the formative period of Percy's preparation, there cannot be much question that Shenstone determined his point of view, so far as it was to be determined from without. Percy showed a due sense of his obligations both before and after his adviser's death. Several times in his letters to Shenstone he refers to "our" collection.† Later, he frankly confessed the guidance of this friend from the

* Hecht, *Thomas Percy und William Shenstone*, pp. 75, 76.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 59.

very beginning of the enterprise, as may be seen from a letter to Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes, in which, referring to a song communicated to him by Shenstone, he says, under date of August 30, 1763: "To whose memory I intend to inscribe the whole Collection, as being un[der]taken at his request, and the plan of it formed under his elegant superintendence." * What this superintendence implied is made clearer still by Percy's statement to Richard Farmer, after his collaborator's death, that he had submitted to Binnel or Shenstone, or both, anything he was desirous "should be worthy any attention." † The real proportion of the material for the *Reliques* that came under Shenstone's eye may be fairly conjectured from an entry in Percy's diary, stating that in January, 1763 (before Shenstone's death), he was preparing the second and third volumes of the collection. ‡

So much consideration has been given to this one of Percy's helpers not only because he was with him from the start, but because he alone, among the correspondents whose utterances have come to my notice, gave the young editor a formulated system upon which to work. § The advisers were a goodly company indeed. The volume of letters that came and went during these seven years of plenty, between Percy and Evans, Farmer, Hailes, and others, suggests that the pastoral care of Easton Maudit

* *Percy-Hailes Correspondence*, Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 32331, p. 33 verso.

† *Percy-Farmer Correspondence*, Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 28222, p. 22 verso.

‡ Percy, *Memoranda*, vol. i, p. 36 verso.

§ Shenstone's very considerable services to Percy have not hitherto received due recognition. Until Hecht published the selections from their correspondence, this significant material remained practically unnoticed by editors and biographers.

was no overwhelming burden to young shoulders. The service of these men was very great in supplying ballad materials and detailed information of various kinds, bibliographical, lexicographical, literary, and historical.

With Lord Hailes, Percy's relations seem to have been particularly agreeable and profitable. The correspondence between them which has been preserved extends from 1762 to 1783. It supplied a want of connections in Scotland, of which Percy had complained to Shenstone in November, 1762.* Hailes gave information with regard to the truth in the *Hardyknute* case, provided Scottish poems, notably *Sir Patrick Spence* and *Edward*, enriched the glossary, criticized individual ballads, and saw the proofs of most, if not the whole, of the collection. In short, he seems to have taken Shenstone's lamentably vacated chair as trusted confidant and coadjutor.†

Farmer, too, with whom Percy kept in close touch from 1762 to 1773, was a most constant help, though comparatively few of his letters prior to 1765 seem to have escaped to tell the tale we should like to hear. Despite his finding fault with the *Mad-Songs*, upon which Percy answers loyally that "they were particularly selected and recommended to me by poor Shenstone, whose opinions have now acquired a kind of prophetic authority with me,"‡ Farmer was a regular resource for Percy in matters relating to Shakespeare especially, and to some extent seems to have served as amanuensis and book-lending divinity.

* Hecht, *Thomas Percy und William Shenstone*, p. 90.

† *Percy-Hailes Correspondence*, pp. 1-61 *passim*.

‡ *Percy-Farmer Correspondence*, p. 37 recto, Percy to Farmer, February 28, 1764.

Johnson, who had urged the printing of the *Folio Manuscript* as early as 1757, seems not to have taken a very active part in the preparation of the *Reliques*, so far as the records known to me indicate. To be sure, he stayed at Percy's house from June 25 to August 18, 1764; but though the host tells in his diary of reading to his guest from his paraphrase of the *Song of Solomon* and "the version of Chevalier Mallet," he does not mention any discussion of the ballads. Since Percy during this period was already engaged in the preparation of his glossaries, it may perhaps be assumed that Johnson gave him some hints in this connection. Under August 7 the journal contains the following dubious entry: "*N.B.* Mr. Johnson stays with us still." (The word "still" was afterward blotted over.)* The Colossus of London, however, will be heard from again.

While Percy had been engaged in his great undertaking, he had found leisure for exotic interests which carried him to the four ends of the earth by an impulse allied to that which turned him back upon the British past. *Hau Kiou Choan* (1761) was followed by the *Miscellaneous Pieces relating to the Chinese* (1762). The Confucian motto on the title-page of the latter work explains sufficiently the editor's point of view: *Omnia explorare intellectum perficit*.

In 1763, Percy published the *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*. In the preface to the book he confesses the influence of Macpherson's success, providently insisting by the way upon the genuineness of his own materials. He offers them, however, in the same apologetic tone which was to mark the

* Percy, *Memoranda*, vol. i, pp. 49 verso-54 verso.

preface to the *Reliques*. One looks in vain for any definite association of the "Runic" pieces with the English ballads as regards content or form, though the similarity might have appeared striking enough. Yet a part of the postscript to *The Complaint of Harold* should be mentioned for the possible light it throws on Percy's much disputed theory of the minstrel craft. In referring to the manly exercises in which the hero of the poem held himself to be accomplished, Percy quotes a supplementary list from some other "Runic" verses, wherein a Northern worthy boasts of his nine aptitudes; the last two are: "I sing to the harp; and compose verses."* It would require no great distortion here to make the singer and poet identical with the harper.

The *Five Pieces* are *The Incantation of Hervor*, from Hickes's translation, resting ultimately on Verelius's edition of the *Hervarar Saga* (1672); *The Dying Ode of Regner Lodbrog*, "from the Islandic original" in Worm's *Literatura Runica*, or *Danica Literatura Antiquissima* (1636); *The Ransome of Egill the Scald*, also "from the Islandic original" in Worm's work; *The Funeral Song of Hacon*, from Peringskiöld's edition of Snorri's *Hist. Regum Septentrionalium*, and, in part, from the versions in Bartholin's *De Causis* and Mallet's *Monumens*† (1756); and, finally, *The Complaint of Harold*, from Bartholin's and Mallet's renderings. Percy's translations are all in sober prose. Mallet, to whose *Introduction à l'Histoire de Dannemarc* (1755) Percy owed a good part of his interest in these Northern subjects, had published partial versions of the *Regner Lod-*

* Percy, *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*, London, 1763, p. 81.

† The complete title is: *Monumens de la Mythologie et de la Poesie des Celtes, et particulièrement des anciens Scandinaves.*

brog, the *Hacon*, and the *Harold* poems in his *Monumens*. Percy knew some of the Danish and English antiquarians as well.*

The quotation of a few lines from the author's preface indicates that if he made no definite association of the Norse verses with the English ballads, he at any rate approached the two kinds of material with much the same interest. The aim in publishing the *Five Pieces*, he says, is to show that if such studies in ancient Northern literature "are not always employed on works of taste or classic elegance, they serve at least to unlock the treasures of native genius; they present us with frequent sallies of bold imagination, and constantly afford matter for philosophical reflection by showing the workings of the human mind in its almost original state of nature."†

Early in 1765, Percy's great collection, preluded the year before by *The Song of Solomon*, came from Dodsley's press in three volumes, entitled *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. In the examination of this work, attention will be directed chiefly to those features which illustrate the editor's theory. His treatment of the texts must be touched upon in so far as it bears upon his views in general. The chief concern will be with his opinions as to ballad questions, such as their authorship, antiquity, tradition, technique, classification, and the like; also with his particular interests in matters which he related in one way or another to the ballads.

First, as to Percy's general attitude toward his material,

* Cf. F. E. Farley, *Scandinavian Influences*, pp. 29 ff.

† For later English versions of the *Five Pieces*, some of them in ballad measures, see *ibid.*, pp. 44 ff.

on which not a great deal need be said. It was an attitude of apology, which throughout his life he never quite cast aside. In the dedication, not to Shenstone but to the Countess of Northumberland, and in the preface, the tone is one of skilful accommodation. The ballads are the "barbarous productions of unpolished ages," but they are "effusions of nature," and have "a pleasing simplicity and many artless graces." Further, "to atone for the rudeness of the more obsolete poems," he offers "a few modern attempts in the same kind of writing," with "little elegant pieces of the lyric kind." Something must, no doubt, be allowed for a certain fashionable deprecation becoming to a young editor; and much must be allowed for a just appreciation of the small poetic value of a number of the pieces. No curve of influence requires to be drawn from the fact that Percy used a copy of the *Old Ballads* (ed. 1727) in his work of collation; * but his position was much like that of the editor of the earlier collection. In place of levity had come serious interest; and this was indicative of a changed temper, not only with reference to Percy but with reference to his public, to whose prepossessions he appealed in a manner sensible and effective, though not in accord with the conscientious ideas of the present dispensation.

The most part of Percy's definite pronouncements on the origin and nature of the ballads is, of course, to be found in the *Essay on the Ancient English Minstrels*. The ill-starred declaration concerning the minstrels as "the genuine successors of the ancient Bards, who united the arts of Poetry and Music, and sung verses to the harp, of their own com-

* The volumes are in the British Museum, and are filled with Percy's marginal notes; but there is no hint of a knowledge of the editor's identity.

posing,"* by its position at the beginning of the essay, drew attention from the later modification of the assertion, namely, "though some of them only recited the compositions of others, many of them still composed songs themselves, and all of them could probably invent a few stanzas on occasion." Even this leaves the genial singers of court and town the better part of the honors, and the attribution is only emphasized by the writer's statement of his belief that "most of the old heroic ballads in the collection were produced by this order of men."† The essay offers no evidence connecting any individual ballad with minstrel authors, though the history of the order is sufficiently illustrated, in part by reference to the Scandinavian scalds. The same weakness marks the ascription of certain technical peculiarities in the songs to the minstrel guild, however accurate the observations, within their limited sphere, really are. The soundest and most valuable criticism in the essay, still under the same assumption, is the distinction between the "old Minstrel ballads" in the northern dialect as "extremely incorrect" and the southern ballads as having "a low and subordinate correctness;" the difference is strikingly illustrated by *The Rising in the North* and *Gernutus*.‡

It is easy enough at this date to point out that Percy allowed far too little for authorship other than that of the minstrels, and too little for the fastening of structural peculiarities through a broader agency of tradition. As to the actual share of the minstrels in the composition and re-

* Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, London, 1765, 3 vols., vol. i, p. xv.

† *Ibid.*, p. xvi. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. xxii, xxiii.

composition of ballads, there is still room for evidence and for conjecture.

Percy touches on their functions also in the essay, prefixed to the third volume, *On the Ancient Metrical Romances*, etc. Yet these remarks are more important for their expression of the author's theory of the origin of romance. Here, again, he is considerably indebted to Mallet's *Introduction*. The business of the British bards and the Scandinavian scalds, he holds, was at first the same, namely, "to record the victories of their warriors, and the genealogies of their Princes, in a kind of popular songs, which were committed to memory, and delivered down from one Reciter to another." The scalds were originally pretty accurate historians; but as their purpose, with the growth of pure historical writing, passed from instruction to entertainment, their productions took on a more and more fictitious character, and assumed all the fantastic embellishment of monsters, dragons, witches, and the like.

"That our old Romances of Chivalry," he concludes, "are derived in a lineal descent from the ancient historical songs of the *Scalds*, is incontestable, because there are many of them still preserved in the North, which exhibit all the seeds of Chivalry before it became a solemn institution." As a proof that "even the common arbitrary fictions of Romance," dealing with spells, enchantments, combats with dragons, and so forth, were "most of them familiar to the ancient Scalds of the North, long before the time of the Crusades," he instances the story of Regner Lodbrog. When fiction had thus become the chief subject of these ancient recitals, "then began the fabulous and romantic songs which for a long time prevailed in France and England

before they had books of chivalry in prose." Yet in both countries, and here we enter again the contested domain, the minstrels still retained so much of their original functions as now and then to sing of actual events.*

The editor does not lay claim to any great knowledge of the time of production of the individual ballads. Therefore his arrangement of each of the three volumes according to a general progression from older to newer numbers is largely tentative. In the gradation he has the natural tendency to place the pieces that deal with historical characters and events at a period contemporary with the occurrences they celebrate, thus making little allowance for the recasting of a story from an original quite different in form, or for the free invention of a ballad on the basis of history or legend. This probably accounts for his dating *Richard of Almaine* not long after 1264, and for his statement in the note following the ballad that "the *Series of Poems* given in this volume will shew the gradual changes of the *English Language* thro' a succession of *Five Hundred years*."† The ballad date is correct, the rest misleading. More frequently he couches his conjectures in general terms, such as in the instance of *Adam Bell*: "The following stanzas will be judged from the stile, orthography, and numbers, to be very ancient."‡ Occasionally, "the reader must determine." In short, caution is the watchword. The more modern version of *Chevy Chase* he places in the latter end of Elizabeth's reign, thus definitely after Sidney's comment.

As to the historicity of the ballads he is reserved. *The Winning of Cales* "seems to have been composed by some

* Percy, *Reliques*, vol. iii, pp. ii ff.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 5. ‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 130.

person who was concerned in the expedition. Most of the circumstances related in it will be found supported by history." * *The Battle of Otterbourne* has "minute circumstances," "many of which are recorded in no chronicle, and were probably preserved in the memory of old people." † *Sir Patrick Spence* "is not altogether without foundation in history, though it has escaped my researches." ‡ This position remains essentially unaltered, in spite of later research.

An examination of Percy's use of descriptive terms for the various pieces will go far toward determining his relation to the question propounded by Shenstone as to his distinction between ballad and song. Some sixty of the numbers are called ballads in title, sub-title, or notes. Among them is *Plain Truth and Blind Ignorance*. *The Ancient Ballad of Chevy Chase* is described both as "ballad" and as "song;" so is *Fair Margaret and Sweet William*. *Sir Cauline* is "ballad" and "romantic tale;" *King Estmere*, "ballad" and "romantic legend;" *Sir Aldingar*, "a fabulous legend;" *The Gentle Herdsman*, "a poem." *The Bonny Earl of Murray*, *The Fairies' Farewell*, *The Dragon of Wantley*, and *St. George for England* are "songs." The editor simply used the accepted terms, with a preference for "ballad." The whole collection is referred to in the preface as a "parcel of old ballads." He evidently did not care to accept the responsibility of strict definition and classification.

Nor did he attempt any thorough analysis of the technique. Nevertheless, his remarks in substance show that he was by no means unconscious of a "cast of style and measure very different from that of contemporary poets of

* Percy, *Reliques*, vol. ii, p. 223. † *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 21.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

a higher class," and "a very remarkable licence of varying the accent of words at pleasure . . . particularly in the rhymes" in the "more ancient ballads of this collection."* Further comments of this sort appear occasionally in the notes to the individual numbers. Thus in connection with *Sir Cauline* he observes: "It is not unusual to meet with redundant stanzas of six lines; but the occasional insertion of a double third or fourth line, as ver. 31, 44, etc., is an irregularity I do not remember to have seen elsewhere."† In the case of *Thomas Lord Cromwell* and of *The Spanish Virgin* he notes the "distich by way of burden" in the originals;‡ and in the notes to *St. George for England* he calls attention to another general distinguishing mark in the "rambling transitions and wild accumulations of unconnected parts" in the old ballads and metrical romances.§ His notice of these characteristic features, though not adequate, was thus distinctly more searching than that of earlier commentators.

It was just his consciousness of these "irregularities" that in large part determined his alterations and improvements. The editors of *Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript* have been quite severe enough upon the text manipulation of "that worthy prelate." It is neither necessary nor profitable to dilate much further on his misrepresentation of the number of pieces he took from his manuscript and the extent of the changes he made. According to Furnivall's *Fore-words*, Percy puffed out *The Child of Ell* from thirty-nine

* Percy, *Reliques, Essay on the Minstrels*, vol. i, p. xxii.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 35.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, vol. ii. p. 58; *The Spanish Virgin*, iii, 247.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 286.

lines to two hundred ; * and yet, in his remarks on the ballad in the *Reliques*, he supposes that “the Reader will easily discover the supplemental stanzas by their inferiority, and at the same time be inclined to pardon it, when he considers how difficult it must be to imitate the affecting simplicity and artless beauties of the original.” † The Folio version of *The Heir of Lin*, again according to Furnivall, acquired nearly a hundred additional lines in the *Reliques*. ‡

In order to illustrate his method more in detail we may look at his treatment of *Glasgerion*, which he says is “printed from the Editor’s Ms. Collection.” § By the testimony of the editors of the *Folio Manuscript* this ballad was “not much ‘corrected.’” || Yet on collation of the original with the adaptation, it appears that Percy altered the spelling to a considerable extent, transposed words in several instances, substituted a word here, added one there, took away the characteristic initial “saide,” or “says,” in several cases, regulated metre and rhyme, and decently composed the stanzaic limbs of the poem. The last process consisted in adding two lines to each of two six-line stanzas, to admit of their division in each case into two regular stanzas. But it should be mentioned that these additions are in the ballad spirit, since they amount to a repetition of the lines to which they are joined. Otherwise, the alterations are a distinct departure from the popular tone. This is an example of what the editor did to the green tree, to an original whose thorough intelligibility required no retouching what-

* *Bishop Percy’s Folio Manuscript*, ed. Hales and Furnivall, London, 1867-68, 3 vols., vol. i, p. xvii. This is the part containing the *Ballads and Romances*.

† Percy, *Reliques*, vol. i, p. 90.

‡ *Folio Manuscript*, vol. i, p. 174.

§ Percy, *Reliques*, vol. iii, p. 43.

|| *Folio Manuscript*, vol. i, p. 246.

ever. This sort of thing is more indicative of his real opinion of the ballads than much formal exposition.

What Percy could not grant to the ballads as poetry he freely allowed them as memorials "exhibiting the customs and opinions of remote ages."* Under his hand they might be made acceptable as art; even without this superadded grace they had the inherent value of antiques. This interest on the part of the editor led him to make the extensive studies which enriched the collection with a very respectable body of illustrative material drawn from various sources. Thus, in the matter of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, he assembles a number of authorities on the basis of which he allows the outlaw to have lived, but finds the epitaph identifying him with the Earl of Huntington suspicious. He interests himself in tracing the superstition of the Wandering Jew. *King Estmere* offers him opportunity to comment on the spirit of the men of the past, which he found pleasure in observing. The calling of the king of Spain in that ballad a "rude paynim" he holds to be in conformity with the "real manners of the barbarous ages," and cites in evidence the mutual denunciations in *Sir Bevis*: "Unchristian houndes" on the one side, and "Christen houndes" on the other. Such details were of far more importance to him than incremental repetition, if he knew of such a thing. One has only to read the illustrative material in the *Old Ballads*, for instance, to realize what a valuable adjunct Percy's introductions were.

The reference to *Sir Bevis* suggests another interest, perhaps the paramount interest aside from the editor's creative absorption in the ballads themselves. This was the relation

* Percy, *Reliques*, dedication.

of the ballads to earlier polite literature, wherein he found an agreeable justification for his dealing with the rude originals. To the illustration of Shakespeare he devotes one book. Much of the poetry drawn together here, it is true, has nothing to do with ballads. Nevertheless, Percy added not a little to the identification of ballad passages or references in the dramatist. More noteworthy are his remarks on sources of plot. He leaves the reader to determine whether *The Frolicsome Duke* suggested the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*; but he agrees with Warton and *The Connoisseur* in regard to the connection of *Gernutus* with *The Merchant of Venice*. The same sort of evidence, he believes, would relate *Titus Andronicus' Complaint* to the play of *Titus Andronicus*, "if the argument offered above for the priority of the ballad of *The Jew of Venice*" (*Gernutus*) holds good. After the publication of the *Reliques*, Percy wrote to Farmer, whom he had consulted in this matter, that Capell could not forgive his "forestalling him in the Ballad of Titus Andronicus." * In the case of *King Leir and his Three Daughters* and the play, Percy takes the same cautious position as in the two last-named cases.

He notes other literary contact. *The Jew's Daughter*, he discovers, "bears a great resemblance to *The Prioress's Tale* in Chaucer;" and *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine* he holds to have furnished Chaucer with his *Wife of Bath's Tale*. This bringing the ballads into touch with accepted literature, in which he owed much to Warton and Hurd, was not the least part of his service. †

* *Percy-Farmer Correspondence*, Percy to Farmer, March 26, 1765, p. 51 verso.

† Cf. his views on the importance of the metrical romances in this particular: *On the Ancient Metrical Romances*, etc., *Reliques*, vol. iii, p. ix.

Here, again, we see an explanation of Percy's elaboration of the sources. As one of the editors of the *Folio Manuscript* aptly suggests, the grocer's son "had a soul."* Without doubt he kept in mind Shenstone's injunction that he must coin the ingots of gold, or let some one else do it. It is not hard to understand his thinking that what the ballads by his alchemy might lose as antiquities they would gain as poetry, — who knows? — perhaps with some of the meed of fame that had come to earlier poets who had minted what they found. Ah, but he should have told us!

In the case of *The Friar of Orders Gray*, in which the artist comes out into the light of noon, though somewhat shyly, he did tell us. A similar feeling for the poetic in the ballad form led to the inclusion, aside from better imitations, of such things as *Jemmy Dawson* and *Bryan and Pereene*, born though they were out of due season. No tears will start now at the reading of these verses; but in their crudeness they hinted at better things to come, when the ballad spirit should be more fully understood.

The influence of the *Reliques* in bringing about this higher understanding needs no great illumination. It operated in spite of the editor's sins and foibles, and to some extent because of them. Small profit can come from speculating on the reception that might have been given to the ballads if they had been sent out unadorned. Yet when we take account of the strong influence of Shenstone, the easy-going critical standards of the time, the anonymity of a greater part of the materials, the editor's poetical bent, and, finally, the shadowy presence of Dodsley with his thought

* *Folio MS.*, vol. i, p. 132, introd. to *The Child of Ell*.

on the market, the enormity of Percy's offences is considerably lessened. He gave to the collection a form and semblance fitted to carry it into the favor of both the "curious" and the "elegant" of his day. When all is said, the apples were of gold, though the "pictures" were of silver.

The *Reliques* was received with generous praise by the reviewers. "One can scarcely peruse this work," says *The Critical Review* for February, 1765, "without imagining that he sees the Genius of antient English poetry bowing the head in approbation of the editor's labours. . . . The whole, to a discerning eye, forms an ethic history of our ancestors . . . delineated by the truest pencil, that of Nature; and however homely her strokes may sometimes be, the resemblance is always just, and therefore pleasing." The critic uses the term "ballad" without discrimination. He doubts the authenticity of *Sir Patrick Spence*, and justly suspects a modern hand in *Edom of Gordon*. That he takes the matter quite easily appears from his comment on the book relating to Shakespeare: "If any modern insertions have crept into these ballads, they are like those reparations or supplements which we have known bestowed by eminent sculptors upon old statues, in which the modern from the antient hand is scarcely, if at all, discernible."*

The Gentleman's Magazine, April, 1765, is neither so circumstantial nor so enthusiastic, but in the main favorable. The critic accepts the account of the minstrels, yet adds that the heroic and historical ballads are "supposed" to have been written by them. He calls attention to a play of the *Jew* presented at the "Bull" theatre before 1579, and concludes "that it is upon the whole most probable that

* *The Critical Review*, vol. xix, pp. 119-130.

Shakespeare copied the same original with the authors of the ballad, and the play of the *Jew*.”*

More discriminating as to ballad style are the comments in *The Monthly Review* for April, 1765. The writer is quite sincere in his admiration for the collection as a whole. Yet he finds that *Corin's Fate* is not in the tone of older poetry, though he does not want to imply criticism of the attempt to “supply the defects” of a mutilated copy. His detailed examination of Mallet's *Margaret's Ghost*, as compared with the “quaintness, alliteration and absurdity” of the version in the *Reliques*, is something different from the too common generalities about “simplicity.”†

Aside from some such minor faultfinding, the tone of the press was commendatory. The more personal testimonies in letters to the editor were rich in praise. One casual criticism may have a wider interest. Horace Walpole writes to the Reverend William Cole, March 9, 1765, to acquaint him with “a delightful publication of this winter, A Collection of Old Ballads and poetry. . . . There were three such [volumes] published between thirty and forty years ago, but very carelessly, and wanting many in this set: indeed, there were others, of a lower sort, which the present editor who is a clergyman thought it decent to omit.”‡

The production of Percy's leisure hours was thus safely brought into the world and well sponsored. For the purpose of a connected view of its subsequent thriving among men, and of the paternal nurture it received in the course of time,

* *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xxxv, pp. 179-183.

† *The Monthly Review*, vol. xxxii, pp. 241-253.

‡ H. Walpole, *Letters*, ed. Cunningham, London, 1891, 9 vols., vol. iv, p. 329.

we may briefly trace its history during the span of nearly half a century in which the author watched over its fate. This survey will take cognizance chiefly of the development of Percy's ballad theory and practice through the continuation of his own researches and through the criticism of others; the evidence must be sought principally in the successive editions of the *Reliques*, but to some extent in less conspicuous sources. Consideration of his influence on contemporary editors in promoting and giving direction to various collections, and of the widening sway of his work as a whole, will be reserved so far as possible for the remaining chapters.

As was to be expected, Percy's novel and "ingenious" work, which caused amateurs and literati to give ear, woke the good fellowship of antiquaries with a start. In all probability, their walls were not yet hung, like those of Scott's Antiquary of a later date, with the "grim old tapestry" of Sir Gawayne's wedding, but with grim old tomes in which lurked the means of argument and expostulation. In the same volume of *The Gentleman's Magazine* which brought the review of the *Reliques*, one Aequus offers Percy the wanting information in regard to James I's jealousy of the bonny Earl of Murray.* This was a helping hand. In a more combative spirit Samuel Pegge read before the Society of Antiquaries, May 29, 1766, some *Observations on Dr. Percy's Account of Minstrels among the Saxons*.

The editor of the *Reliques*, he contends, has given a false or at best an ill-grounded idea of the rank and condition of the minstrels in the Saxon times. "We cannot reasonably argue from the modes and customs either of the Britons

* *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xxxv, pp. 330, 331.

or Danes to those of the Saxons." The historians do not speak of King Alfred as a musician, and if the story of his minstrel disguise were true, it would prove no wide estimation for the order. As for Anlaf, of whom a similar tale is told, he was not a Saxon but a Dane. "Indeed, the presumption is very strong against the existence of any such rank of men amongst the Saxons as Dr. Percy speaks of;" they are not mentioned before the Norman Conquest, and the Saxons probably had no word "expressive of the character of a *bard* or *scald*."* Pegge does not find fault with Percy's identification of the poet with the harper and singer.

Percy writes to Farmer, October 22, 1766, that he has learned of Pegge's strictures, and proceeds: "Tho' I shall not think them worth refuting in form, in my new edition of the *Reliques*; yet I shall correct whatever faults I think he has truly hit off, and shall obviate all the rest of his objections that are worth notice."† Accordingly, he does not mention Pegge in the new edition, but strengthens the essay with additional historical evidence from various periods. In the third volume of *Archaeologia*, Pegge inserted a letter, dated June, 1773, regretting the publication of his paper in the second volume, after Percy's rewritten essay had removed his doubts; ‡ for all of which he was duly recognized by Percy in the next edition of the *Reliques*.

In spite of the accumulation of data in the second edition (1767) to illustrate the history of the minstrels, Percy's view of their poetic and musical functions remains the same. Nor do the alterations in the other essays essentially affect the

* *Archaeologia*, vol. ii, 1773, pp. 100-106.

† *Percy-Farmer Correspondence*, pp. 69, 70.

‡ *Archaeologia*, vol. iii, 1775, p. 310.

case. The changes in the texts of the ballads do not indicate any decided advance over his earlier opinions of the material or of the proper method of editing it. As a rule, they involve only the spelling or other things of no great importance. However, he gives the more modern version of *Chevy Chase* some substitute stanzas modernized from the older version.* Besides rearranging some of the numbers, he adds three new "sonnets," one of which is the ballad of *Jephthah, Judge of Israel*, supplied by Steevens. With reference to *Gernutus* he has come to the conclusion that Shakespeare drew only in part from the ballad, in part from an Italian novel; in this connection he refers to an abridgment of the novel in Johnson's edition of Shakespeare.

Thus it appears that the editor was not content to let his work stand in its first form. On the contrary, as his further correspondence shows, he kept up an interest in the improvement of his collection and in other matters relating to the subject. April 30, 1768, he writes to George Paton, with whom he was in frequent communication, principally in connection with Herd's work, that he is desirous of collecting "all sorts of ancient poetry, whether printed or manuscript, particularly those fine old Scottish Songs and Ballads which are so much admired for their simplicity and artless unassuming beauties: Historical ballads would, in a more particular manner, be exceedingly acceptable."†

In a later letter from Percy to the same Scottish corre-

* Percy, *Reliques*, ed. M. M. A. Schröer, Berlin, 1893, 2 pts., Part II, p. 957. This edition is based on the first issue of the *Reliques*, but notes the alterations in the three subsequent editions; I have used it throughout in the study of the text.

† *Letters from Thomas Percy, D.D., John Callander, David Herd, and Others to George Paton*, Edinburgh, 1830, pp. 1, 2.

spondent, January 12, 1769, there is evidence of an interest which hitherto seems to have had little prominence. Paton has sent him some material, for which Percy thanks the donor and with uncloyed appetite asks for more: "What I chiefly want to recover are these fine old historical songs, which are only preserved in the memories of old people, etc.; these are in so perishable a state, that I apprehend it is nearly as much merit to retrieve them from that oblivion which they are falling into, as to compose them at first."*

Meanwhile, Percy had been giving suggestions, by request, for Herd's first volume of *Ancient and Modern Scots Songs* (1769), of which more in due order. The next year he received from Paton a "curious copy of the first edition of *Hardyknute*, than which," he makes acknowledgment, November 17, 1770, "you could not have made me a more acceptable present." Further, he refers to it as "that beautiful poem."†

Not long after, he became involved in the Chatterton affair. Mercurial Walpole, whose delighted reception of the *Reliques* has already been noted, writes to the Reverend W. Mason, May 25, 1722: "Somebody, I fancy Dr. Percy, has produced a dismal dull ballad, called 'the Execution of Sir Charles Bawdin,' and given it for one of the Bristol Poems, called Rowley's—but it is a still worse counterfeit than those that were first sent to me; it grows a hard case on our ancestors, who have every day bastards laid to them."‡ Already, some months previously, the alleged author had cleared himself of even abetting such a thing by

* *Letters from Thomas Percy, D.D., John Callander, David Herd, and Others to George Paton*, Edinburgh, 1830, pp. 7, 8.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 16. ‡ Walpole, *Letters*, vol. v, p. 389.

a letter in response to Dr. Ducarel's request for an opinion : "Dr. Percy has seen many former specimens of the same verses . . . at present he can only say that their *genuineness* is rather *doubted* till the original manuscript can be produced."*

The correspondence with Paton continues. In a letter of September 19, 1773, Percy describes the Roxburghe Collection as "loose detached ballads collected into volumes—such as are still sold on stalls ; not one in a hundred of them fit to be republished." Further, he asks Paton to use his good offices to secure an extension of "my time for keeping the old manuscript" (editor's note: "The Bannatyne MS.").† A month later he promises to look over the pieces for Herd's second volume.‡ The next year, August 22, 1774, he writes again to Paton in regard to the same matter. This communication, on the eve of the third edition of the *Reliques*, is of particular importance in throwing light on Percy's editorial opinions at this period: "I have looked over the MS. Collection of Scottish songs, and find most of them are fragments too mutilated and imperfect to afford much pleasure to a reader in their present state ; and yet most of them contain charming hints, which might give occasion to very beautiful songs, if supplied and filled up, in the manner that old broken fragments of antique statues have been repaired and compleated by modern masters. I think I could fill up the breaches of some of them myself." Further, he announces his intention of publishing in three or four years another collection "in the manner of my *Re-*

* Eliot Warburton, *Memoirs of Horace Walpole*, London, 1851, 2 vols., vol. ii, p. 336.

† *Letters* (1830), pp. 27-30. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

liques," and proposes to insert some of Herd's material, if permitted to "fill up the deficiencies of some of them in the manner I attempted before." In return he suggests that Herd might print some of these poems, and make use of the Bannatyne manuscript after he himself has taken from it what he might want.*

This bird's-eye view has taken account of only a portion of Percy's correspondence during this period. Yet it has touched upon the principal ballad publication which came under his influence; we shall see later something of what use Herd made of the hints given him. The extracts may have shown, also, with a degree of fullness, how Percy continued to add to his own store of material and of knowledge toward the improvement of the intended third edition of his work and other contemplated publications. While he had been giving and receiving in this way, he had been active in somewhat related enterprises, which require a brief mention. The translation of P. H. Mallet's *Introduction à l'Histoire de Dannemarc* (1755) and *Monumens* (1756), and Percy's own ballad imitation, *The Hermit of Warkworth*, are expressions of one and the same interest.

The version of Mallet's work, from which Percy had read to Johnson while engaged upon it in 1764, finally appeared in 1770, under the title of *Northern Antiquities*. In it Percy corrected Mallet's confusion of Celtic with Gothic, and otherwise added to the value of the original by his own researches. The work gave English readers a good deal of needful information about the Scandinavian North, and an acquaintance with part of Snorri's *Edda* and with certain *Eddic* and scaldic poems, among them the *Hávamál*.

* *Letters* (1830), pp. 46-48.

In 1771, *The Hermit of Warkworth* came from the press, a tribute to the ancient line of the Percies. The poem is an example of what the author thought a ballad should be; but the tale within a tale, the romance length, the sentimental coloring, and the polished niceties of the language remove the production from its ordained sphere, though the narrative foundation of the Hermit's story is ballad-like enough.

The conflicting opinions expressed in the reviews are enlightening as to the divided state of mind in the public with regard to the bearing of all this revival of the antique. *The Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1771, adjudged the poem a successful imitation.* *The Monthly Review* for the same month reached a different conclusion. After some introductory remarks on the development of the fine arts from rudeness to elegance, the writer deplores the "fashionable but false taste of imitating the venal simplicity of the old ballad poets. . . . What should we think of the taste of those who would assert that the original *Nut Brown Maid* is superior in point of composition to that of Prior?" Then follow some well-taken comments on the confusion of old and new in the style of Percy's poem. The critic dares not hope to induce the author to abandon "a species of poetry, the *revival* of which we cannot but condemn. We give this public criticism in support of public taste."†

Percy sinned no more against this specific commandment, but continued in his earlier ways by sending out a third

* *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xli, p. 366. *The Critical Review* for May, 1771, was more laudatory, and noted a resemblance between Percy's poem and *Chevy Chase*; see vol. xxxi, p. 393.

† *The Monthly Review*, vol. xlv, pp. 96-98.

edition of the *Reliques* (1775). This impression, according to the editor, has received certain corrections and additions to the illustrative material, supplied in part by friends. His critical thesis with regard to the minstrels stands in the main as before, though some new data have found a place in the essay. Notable among the alterations in the texts of the ballads are a longer and older version of *The Battle of Otterbourne*, and a "more authentic transcript" of *The Tournament of Tottenham*, to which Percy had been directed by Tyrwhitt. Minor alterations in the readings of the individual ballads are quite frequent, when all are counted; but they do not indicate a tangible turning in the editor's principles. *Glasgerion*, for example, remains as before. Some notes, of greater or less importance, are added here and there. Nothing seems to have come, however, of a suggestion from George Ashby, in a letter to Percy, dated March 30, 1774, for a "new disposition" of the material "more in the order of time or subject," on the ground that "now each volume is like a perfect work;" nor of the same correspondent's searching question: "As you admit modern ones, query, is your title page just?"* A new number, *The Bride's Burial*, "from two ancient copies in black letter," is added to the collection. Thus improvement marked the new edition, as it had marked those which had gone before.

However pleased others were with the growing favor of the *Reliques*, there was one painful antiquary who found that all was not as it should be. The publication of Warton's *History of English Poetry* gave unhappy Joseph Ritson the opportunity which his scholarship and his morbidity

* Nichols's *Illustrations*, vol. vii, p. 389.

had prepared him to make use of. In certain *Observations on the First Three Volumes of the History of English Poetry* (1782), he laid hands on both Warton and Percy in very ungentle fashion. "You say," runs an extract from this "familiar letter to the author," "you think you 'have somewhere seen a romance in verse, entitled *The Turke and Gawaine*.' The bishop of Dromore says he has it in his folio Ms. Did you ever see that?"* Again, with the full diapason of sarcasm, he plays upon Warton's statement that *The Deadman's Song* "is worthy of Doctor Percy's excellent collection." In support of his declaration that the piece is "a most wretched performance," Ritson appeals to Percy himself, "of whose taste in poetry (that is, when he understands it) I have the highest opinion; and who may, indeed, easily make it deserving of a place in his 'excellent collection,' if he will but take the same pains with it, which he has taken with most of the other old pieces so faithfully reprinted in that celebrated work. It has done His busyness, however, and that's enough."† Ritson never forgave Percy the bishopric to which he had just been promoted.

Ritson returned to the attack in his *Select Collection of English Songs* (1783). In the preface he insists that there is no connection between his work and the *Reliques*. "And indeed," he continues, in his characteristic tone, "if the contrary had been the case, the inaccurate, and sophisticated manner in which everything that had real pretensions to antiquity, has been printed by the right reverend editor of that admired and celebrated work, would be a sufficient apology

* J. Ritson, *Observations on the First Three Volumes of the History of English Poetry*, London, 1782, p. 11.

† *Ibid.*, p. 22.

for any one who might undertake to publish more faithful, though, haply, less elegant copies.”* In a note he explains that he has detected Percy’s falsifications by an examination of some of the manuscripts used by him, and offensively points a moral on forgery by persons in high places.†

In the *Historical Essay on National Song*, which will be discussed at greater length in a later connection, Ritson questions the propriety of Percy’s “inferences, and indeed his general hypothesis” as to the minstrels, suggests that his treatise should more properly have been entitled “An Essay on the ancient *French Minstrels*,” denies the alleged respectability of the order, and maintains that, aside possibly from *Chevy Chase* and *Otterbourne*, “we have not a single composition which can, with any degree of certainty, or even plausibility, be given to a person of this description.”‡ He charges the editor of the *Reliques* with ascribing too great an antiquity to a number of his pieces, whose genuineness “cannot be properly investigated or determined without an inspection of the original manuscript, from which they are said to be extracted.”§ As if this were not enough, he refers to Percy’s “one most beautiful song” as an imitation of *Henry and Emma*.||

Such an attack, however justified it was at bottom, could not but be very galling to Percy; yet he maintained a dignified attitude, and raised no loud outcries against the accuser. Meanwhile, he had continued his correspondence with Paton, and, besides, had come in contact with another

* J. Ritson, *A Select Collection of English Songs*, London, 1783, 3 vols., vol. i, p. x.

† *Ibid.*, p. x, n. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. li-liii. § *Ibid.*, p. lviii.

|| *Ibid.*, p. lxxviii.

ballad enthusiast, to whom frequent reference must be made hereafter, namely, John Pinkerton.

Pinkerton, it appears, had submitted to Percy his fictitious second part of *Hardyknute*, which presently was to create such a commotion in black-letter circles. Percy answers, March 25, 1778: "I must be so ingenuous as to confess that I think the second part of *Hardyknute* hardly equal to the first. . . . However, with your permission, I shall certainly insert it, and the other new pieces [which Pinkerton had sent him from a manuscript], whenever I give an additional volume." * This opinion of Percy's no doubt encouraged Pinkerton to present the figment to the public in his *Scottish Tragic Ballads* (1781); that it was his intention to publish the thing himself before he offered it to Percy is evidenced by a later letter.

The editor of the *Reliques* had, indeed, been for some time thinking of enlarging his work. July 20, 1778, he writes to the same correspondent, who had gained his good graces by supplying various poems at intervals, that he has long been arranging the materials for the additional volumes; but he adds, with the deprecatory statement characteristic of his later years: "I have not so much leisure, and perhaps not quite so keen an appetite, for amusements of this kind as when I was younger. . . . I have commonly taken up these trifles, as other grave men have done cards, to unbend and amuse the mind when fatigued with graver studies." Thereupon, under the pledge of secrecy, he says that he means to have his son edit the new series.† The realiza-

* Nichols's *Illustrations*, vol. viii, p. 93.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 94. See *Letters* (1830), pp. 75-77, for a letter from Percy to Paton, November 27, 1778, to the same effect.

tion of this purpose, however, was defeated by the early death of the son.

The next year Percy writes to Pinkerton, under date of July 2, 1779, hinting that he is on the point of abandoning the project of a new publication, and suggesting that Pinkerton should carry out his original intention of printing the second part of *Hardyknute*, with other pieces, "in a little elegant miscellany," from which the younger Percy might draw.* Yet he continues to give Pinkerton hints and material assistance for the *Scottish Tragic Ballads* (1781), and later for the *Select Scottish Ballads* (1783). In connection with the latter work he asks the editor, January 3, 1783, to mention his "slight poetical pursuits" as the "amusement of my younger years and hours of relaxation from severer studies." In proof of his occupation with weightier affairs, he says that Dodsley is reprinting the book, "without my being able to peruse or look at a single sheet or page in it."†

While Percy was thus ostensibly taking a nonchalant view of his great work, and probably also of his principal critic's opinions, his friends were active in his behalf. One of them, J. C. Walker, even went to the length, some years later, of undertaking to set Ritson right as to the Folio Manuscript. Among Ritson's letters is one to Walker, dated November 4, 1789, in which he expresses admiration of the *Reliques*, and admits that "what you have been so obliging as to tell me about the folio MS has in a great measure removed my prejudice on that head."‡ This letter Walker communicated to Percy some days later.§

* Nichols's *Illustrations*, vol. viii, p. 96. † *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 102.

‡ Ritson, *Letters*, ed. Nicolas, London, 1833, 2 vols., vol. i, p. 152.

§ Nichols's *Illustrations*, vol. vii, p. 711.

A few years afterward, it appears, Percy hinted to Walker that he had been too friendly with the enemy. Though I have not seen this letter of Percy's, a communication from Walker to Percy, probably during the spring of 1794, was doubtless called forth by some such occasion. At all events, Walker gives several extracts from letters sent him by Ritson, which throw light on the matter at issue. January 1, 1790, Ritson had stated that he was still not altogether satisfied as to the truth in the case. In November, 1792, he had expressed himself in part as follows: "It is not the mere existence of the MS that I dispute; of that I have long had satisfactory assurance. Whether it will, on a careful examination, justify the use Bishop Percy has or pretends to have made of it is a perfectly distinct question."*

Ritson's mention of his own *Ancient Songs* (1790) in the same connection carries us back for some examination of his treatment of Percy in this work. The advertisement gives the caution that "the reader must not expect to find, among the pieces here preserved, either the interesting fable, or the romantic wildness of a late elegant publication," but such as "at least have the recommendation of evident and indisputable authenticity." In the *Observations on the Ancient English Minstrels* the editor finds it "remarkable that we have yet seen no authority which should induce one to think, that there ever was a single Englishman, who 'united the arts of poetry and music, and sung verses to the harp of his own composing;' nor in fact is any such authority to be found."† He returns to his earlier distinction between the

* Nichols's *Illustrations*, vol. vii, pp. 726, 727.

† Ritson, *Ancient Songs*, London, 1790, p. xii.

French and English minstrels, but embroils himself, in the exclusive list of eight ballads "which, according to the rules laid down by Dr. Percy, may be supposed to have been originally written for and sung to the harp,"* by a vulnerable positiveness. The essay contains several innuendoes at the Folio Manuscript, but no longer a flat denial of its existence.

A recognition of the real strength of Ritson's criticism is to be seen in a comment of *The Critical Review*, November, 1792, upon the *Ancient Songs*. Though the writer repudiates Ritson's list of minstrel ballads, and deplores his personal attack upon Percy, he observes: "It were, however, to be wished that Dr. Percy had, in the pieces which he has confessedly amended and supplied, pointed out the exact original state of each production; otherwise a modern invention may be quoted as an ancient authority, in matters relating to customs and manners."† Ritson had, in fact, won the day.

Indeed, the fourth edition of the *Reliques* (1794), ostensibly edited by the bishop's nephew, is in a measure a plea of guilty. To be sure, the advertisement puts the existence of the Folio Manuscript beyond question by an appeal to several very reputable witnesses. But it contains also the telltale statement that "the Text in particular hath been emended in many passages by recurring to the old copies;" and the reader is to understand that, in the case of pieces taken from the Folio Manuscript, the alterations are made from that source. In a note to *King Estmere* a similar statement is made with reference to that ballad in particular; and the point is emphasized in other cases. The number of

* Ritson, *Ancient Songs*, London, 1790, pp. xxxi, xxxii.

† *The Critical Review*, new series, vol. vi, p. 286.

textual changes varies considerably for different ballads. *Adam Bell* and the more modern version of *Chevy Chase* are very noticeably affected. *Glasgerion*, to recur to our touchstone, is restored to something near its original condition, but the editor saves his principles by retaining some of the emendations. The deleted "saide," or "says," is reinstated in part, but the added four lines, with other lesser improvements, keep their place. While the alterations thus have a general tendency toward older readings, a number of the ballads remain materially as before.

In other respects, also, the effect of Ritson's criticism is observable. Thus *The Heir of Lin*, according to the first edition, was "given from a copy in the editor's folio manuscript;" according to the fourth, the ballad "is found" in the source named. "Some breaches and defects" becomes "the breaches and defects." "A few supplemental stanzas" becomes simply "supplemental stanzas," further specified by the admission, "as indeed the conclusion of the story was suggested by a modern ballad on a similar subject." Of this piece, too, "several ancient Readings are restored from the folio MS."

Very marked changes are rather inconspicuously made in the much berated *Essay on the Minstrels*. "Verses . . . of their own composing" is made to read "composed by themselves or others." By the mere transposition of two words the later objectionable passage starts into a new meaning: "As their art declined, many [!] of them only recited the compositions of others, but some [!] of them still composed songs themselves." The editor maintains, however, that most of the old historical ballads were the work of this order of men.

Two new pieces were included in the fourth edition, namely, *A Robyn Jolly Robyn* and *The Ancient Fragment of the Marriage of Sir Gawaine*.

The division of honors between Percy and Ritson in the matter of ballad authorship may properly be made in Scott's adjudication of the case in his *Essay on Romance*. He held the fundamental position that the earliest productions of romance consisted of "short narratives or ballads" on heroic subjects. Percy, according to Scott's view, gave the minstrels too much, Ritson too little. He sums up the evidence as follows: "All minstrels did not use the harp, and recite or compose romantic poetry; but it cannot be denied that such was the occupation of the most eminent of the order." This conclusion, he says further, "Ritson has rather admitted than denied; and the number of quotations which his industry has brought together, rendered such an admission inevitable."*

With the publication of the fourth edition Percy's useful work was practically completed. The early death of the nephew who had assisted him prevented the issuance of the long contemplated fourth volume. Despite his habitual protests, however, Percy continued to interest himself keenly in the "amusements" of his youth. His accumulated reputation made him an oracle to the young men who were coming on as ballad editors. With Pinkerton he appears to have broken definitely over an epistolary discussion of the minstrels. The last letter in their correspondence which I have found was written by Pinkerton, September 4, 1794; it contained the conclusive statement that "*minstrel* only im-

* Walter Scott, *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, Edinburgh, 1827, 6 vols., vol. vi, pp. 182 ff.

plied musician, and *was never used for a bard, maker, or poet.*"* On this rock their friendship broke. Other connections came instead for Percy.

One of them was Walter Scott, who, grown to manhood under the spell of *Hardyknute*, *Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead*, and *Robin Hood*, had for some time been collecting his Border traditions, and trying his hand at ballad imitation. To Percy he submitted his *Eve of St. John* and *Glenfinlas*, and also the plan for his projected collection. Robert Anderson, who appears to have acted as intermediary, notes the result in a letter to Percy, dated September 13, 1800: "Mr. Scott was highly gratified by your Lordship's approbation of his ballads, and the scheme of his collection of Border Lays, which is not yet gone to press."† Thus courteous Percy gave a hand of fellowship to gallant Douglas.

With another young man of the new century the knight of the old order came in helpful contact about the same time, namely Robert Jamieson, who likewise was preparing to publish an edition of ballads. Only one citation from the interesting correspondence which sprang up between them need be given; but it is the most important critical utterance from Percy's declining years that I have met with. Jamieson had written to Percy regarding the Folio Manuscript, which he wished to consult for his proposed publication. Percy answered under date of April 4, 1801, that, until his nephew had taken from the manuscript what he might want to use, it would not be possible to confer the desired favor. In lieu of the treasured document, Percy sent the petitioner a copy in his own hand of a piece which

* Nichols's *Illustrations*, vol. viii, p. 149. † *Ibid.*, vol. vii, p. 87.

Jamieson desired most to consult, with the following notable remarks: "By it you will see the defective and incorrect state of the old text in the ancient folio MS and the irresistible demand on the Editor of the 'Reliques,' to attempt some of those conjectural emendations which have been blamed by one or two rigid critics, but without which the collection would not have deserved a moment's attention." *

What is this but Percy's original doctrine, derived from Shenstone, of the "old barons" and the "new robes"? Nothing could show more clearly how Percy's fundamental critical position remained unaltered through forty years of good report and evil. Himself in great measure the product of a "curious and elegant" age, he became a conspicuous sign of the "curious and elegant" to his generation. Had he not been curious, the Folio Manuscript would have nourished the kitchen fire a few mornings more, and many other leaves from the past would have rested long under accumulating dust. Had he not been elegant, the *Reliques* would probably not have gained so instant and so general an acceptance. He faced the difficult task of popularizing the ballads, and his method, questionable as it may seem to us, proved to be not ill-adapted to the purpose. The remarkable development of ballad research throughout the remaining decades of the century was surely in the main his work. Even Ritson was a son of Percy, though no filial piety marked the relationship. Ritson, of course, was right in his editorial principles, and should have all due honor for his valuable services in bringing about a better

* Nichols's *Illustrations*, vol. viii, p. 341. The same volume contains other interesting correspondence between the two.

order of things in textual criticism. It was, indeed, unfortunate that Percy, with his enormous influence, persisted in his course, and made over his ideals in some measure to younger men like Jamieson and Scott. Yet, after all, he postponed only for a time the consummation for which his own work had so largely prepared. What, then, can we say of this man, in the final accounting, but that he made the worse appear the better reason, and corrupted the youth? We can say that he labored better than he or his contemporaries knew, and his works do follow him. He might well drink, with something like Socratic equanimity, the hemlock doled out to him by Ritson, since he had redeemed a good part of the traditional inheritance of his race, and helped to renew the poetic vigor of nations. The Scandinavian peoples, from whose earlier literature he had drawn not a little, were by no means the least among his beneficiaries.

CHAPTER VI

GOLDSMITH TO JOHNSON : EWALD TO KELLGREN

1759-1781

THE period preceding the publication of the *Reliques*, as set forth in Chapter Four, was in general distinctly Scottish. The period we are now to consider has a marked English aspect, in that the more prominent critical and literary productions connected with the ballads are of English origin. Percy's work, by its inherent worth, came into widening dominance in its own field, and into momentous influence upon poetry considered as a whole. That it had a tendency to discourage rivalry for a time, the successive editions of the collection and the comparative dearth of other similar publications offer striking testimony. Aikin's *English Songs* and Evans's *Old Ballads* are the not highly notable exceptions in England. Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs* is the significant exception for the other side of the Border. In the verse-making of the period and in critical or other literature in general there is an appreciable amount of material traceable, or in some way related, to Percy's "trifles." On the whole, the eminence during these years lay outside of Scotland, as will appear from the names of the most prominent men that concern us here, namely, Warton, Johnson, and Goldsmith. All three were in personal contact with Percy.

Although a number of Goldsmith's casual utterances on ballad topics came before the public prior to the appearance of the *Reliques*, and although there might thus be reason to have considered his position in an earlier chapter, it may properly be taken up at this point, since Gold-

smith's more important work came after 1765, and since, in the matter of influence as between him and Percy, the likelihood is at least quite as great for the predominance of Percy as for that of Goldsmith. At any rate, there appears to be little warrant for Miss Gaussen's statement that Percy owed more to Goldsmith than to any other literary man of the day.*

The two men seem to have become acquainted with one another in 1758, through Percy's close friend, Dr. James Grainger.† According to Percy's *Memoranda*, they met again early in 1759; and they seem to have been thrown together at various times while the *Reliques* was under preparation.

Meanwhile, Goldsmith established the short-lived periodical, *The Bee*, in which his earliest references to ballads are found. In an essay on *Happiness*, which came out in the number for October 13, 1759, he speaks of the more refined enjoyments of his later years as less pleasing than the simple joys of his earlier life in the country. "The music of the finest singer is dissonance to what I felt when our old dairy-maid sung me into tears with 'Johnny Armstrong's Last Good Night,' or the cruelty of 'Barbara Allen.'"‡ This encomium, though plainly sincere, has a tinge of condescension.

In a similar spirit, but from a somewhat different coign of observation, Goldsmith looks down to the popular poetry in a later essay, *A Flemish Tradition*. "Every country," he begins, "has its traditions, which, either too minute or

* Alice C. C. Gaussen, *Percy: Prelate and Poet*, London, 1908, p. 44.

† Nichols's *Illustrations*, vol. vii, p. 228.

‡ O. Goldsmith, *Works*, ed. Gibbs, London, 1884-92, 5 vols., vol. ii, p. 334.

not sufficiently authentic to receive historical sanction, are handed down among the vulgar, and serve at once to instruct and amuse them. Of this number, the adventures of Robin Hood, the hunting of Chevy Chase, and the bravery of Johnny Armstrong, among the English; of Karl Dereg, among the Irish; and Creighton, among the Scots, are instances." * Thereupon follows the story of Bidderman the Wise, which the writer no doubt picked up in his wanderings in the Low Countries. It is of interest to note how many considerations of ballad theory are drawn together here, though there is nothing new. As for the reference to the "vulgar," that was the usual thing to say; Goldsmith doubtless had more real admiration for the ballads than, for instance, Burke, who had said much the same.

When Goldsmith, in *A Reverie*, printed in the same organ, November 3, 1759, employs the ballad-singer for a satiric purpose, there is no great contempt in it. He relates how, after he had been admitted into the "Fame Machine," which had just carried Addison and other celebrities, the carriage was halted by a most "whimsical figure . . . hung round with papers of his own composing, not unlike those who sing ballads in the streets," who "came dancing up to the door with all the confidence of instant admittance," only to be firmly rebuffed by the coachman. † If there was a modicum of derision in the simile, Goldsmith perhaps remembered the straits of his college days, when he had to write ballads for bread.

Goldsmith's most interesting and, because supported by

* O. Goldsmith, *Works*, ed. Gibbs, London, 1884-92, 5 vols., vol. ii, pp. 366, 367.

† *Ibid.*, p. 390.

practice, most valuable criticism is in *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). Here we read how farmer Flamborough and the blind piper used to come to the vicarage, and keep the company in good spirits: "While one played the other would sing some soothing ballad, Johnny Armstrong's Last Good Night, or the Cruelty of Barbara Allen." * The eighth chapter is the most important for our purpose from every point of view. The family dines in the field amid tranquil surroundings. Sophia is brought to think of Gay's poem of the lovers who were struck dead in each other's arms; her brother thinks Ovid's *Acis and Galatea* better. Mr. Burchell objects that both poets have loaded their verse with epithets: "English poetry . . . is nothing at present but a combination of luxuriant images, without plot or connection; a string of epithets, that improve the sound without carrying on the sense." Thereupon he recites the ballad of *Edwin and Angelina* by way of contrast:

Turn, gentle hermit of the dale,
And guide my lonely way,
To where yon taper cheers the vale,
With hospitable ray, etc.†

The piece as here first published has the title *A Ballad*. It had been privately printed the year before and sent to the Countess of Northumberland, Percy's patroness, under the name of *Edwin and Angelina*; it was sometimes known as *The Hermit*. Kenrick later charged Goldsmith with having borrowed the poem from Percy's *Friar of Orders Gray*, whereupon Goldsmith sent a letter to *The St. James Chronicle*, June, 1767, stating that he could not see much resem-

* O. Goldsmith, *Works*, ed. Gibbs, London, 1884-92, 5 vols., vol. i, p. 85.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 98-102.

blance between the two: "If there be any, his ballad is taken from mine. I read it to Mr. Percy some years ago; and he (as we both considered these things as trifles at best) told me with his usual good humour, the next time I saw him, that he had taken my plan to form the fragments of Shakespeare into a ballad of his own. He then read me his little Cento, if I may so call it, and I highly approved it."* In the third edition of the *Reliques*, Percy gave his version of the occurrence to the effect that both he and Goldsmith were indebted to *The Gentle Herdsman*. Many years later he told the same story in his *Life of Goldsmith*.† This information makes it possible to reconcile the two explanations without unfavorably involving either of the poets.

To return to the ballad itself. While it has the essential narrative quality and a simple plot, there are other features which are not quite in keeping with the category in which the author would have it placed. The hermit's moralizing on contentment and earthly vanity is one thing; and though the poet presented his verse as a contrast to the art poetry of his time, *Edwin and Angelina* has still too rhetorical a cast for its naïve subject. A comparison of the earlier with the later version does not materially qualify this view.‡ Thus Goldsmith quite agrees with Percy in regarding the ballads as "trifles," capable of artistic uses only by being lifted up to a poetic level. Yet with all this, he undoubtedly admired genuinely their unaffected artlessness. Further insight into his ideas of poetic adaptations may be

* O. Goldsmith, *Works*, ed. Gibbs, London, 1884-92, 5 vols., vol. ii, pp. 21, 22.

† Goldsmith, *Miscellaneous Works*, London, 1801, 4 vols., vol. i, p. 74.

‡ Goldsmith, *Works*, ed. Gibbs, vol. ii, pp. 23 ff.

gained from his unfavorable notice of Shenstone's *Pastoral Ballad*, and from his praise of Tickell's "ballad-thinking," and of his *Colin and Lucy* as "the best in our language in this way." * Goldsmith's plea for simplicity in general, thrown out in his *Enquiry into . . . Polite Learning* (1759), chapter eleven, "Let us, instead of writing finely, try to write naturally," † is exemplified in his own prose style.

Quite a different thing is Johnson's stateliness of language, as Johnson was by instinct and choice one of a cultivated community, while Goldsmith, with all his polite learning and worldly citizenship, was essentially of the folk. The divergence in the talents of the two men is marked by their attitude toward popular poetry.

In view of Johnson's almost lifelong apathy for the ballads it is hard to believe that his interest in Percy's schemes ever amounted to much more than good-humored complaisance. As stated above, he seems not to have been very active in furthering the *Reliques*. There is a testimony from Percy which explains this, at least to some extent. About the time when the collection left the press, Johnson paid a visit to Farmer in Cambridge. Farmer writes to Percy not long afterward, February 25, 1765, and gives certain details from their conversations. "I admire him," says Farmer, "and I pity him." Johnson has found something to object to in the character of every one who came under discussion. "Hurd, for instance, comes off badly, and Shenstone still worse: he pities you for your opinion of the latter, indeed what he takes from *you*, he gives to your better

* O. Goldsmith, *Works*, ed. Gibbs, vol. v, pp. 160, 161.

† *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 516.

half—Mrs. Percy's judgment is, he assures me (when there has been an equal opportunity of information) much to be prefer'd to her husband's!"*

To which Percy answers, March 26, 1765: "I don't wonder that I have suffered in his opinion, for the respect I have expressed for my friend Shenstone: I know very well he can never forgive me for mentioning him and Shenstone in the Same Page."† Though adjudication in this case may be a delicate matter, an impartial weighing of the praise meted out to Johnson and to Shenstone in the preface to the *Reliques* gives no reason to question Percy's intimation to Farmer. The incident did not lead, however, to an estrangement between the two principals. The measure of contumely was not yet full.

In the same year Johnson published his edition of Shakespeare. Since much of the material was being gathered while Percy was occupied with his preparation, a note communicated by Warton refers to the approaching issuance of the *Reliques*, while other notes direct attention to the work as already before the public. Altogether, the results of Percy's investigations appear to a considerable degree in the comments on Shakespeare's ballad passages. A good number of these notes, however, are drawn from earlier editors.

In the preface Johnson remarks that the dramatist took his English histories from English chronicles and English ballads. With reference to the individual plays, also, there is a recognition of possible ballad sources. *The Merchant of Venice*, to be sure, he holds to have been derived mainly from the *Pecorone* of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, and from a

* *Percy-Farmer Correspondence*, p. 49.

† *Ibid.*, p. 51 verso.

novel akin to Boccaccio's story of the caskets; he does not mention the ballad of *Gernutus*.^{*} In the appendix to volume one he quotes a note communicated by Warton, calling attention to his theory as set forth in the *Observations on the Faerie Queene*; further, Warton speaks of a ballad on the subject of *Romeo and Juliet*, which he thinks is older than the play, and which gives certain particulars used in the play but not found in Bandello. He mentions also Percy's forthcoming version of *King Cophetua*, and proposes ballad originals for *King Lear* and *Titus Andronicus*.[†]

Johnson himself enlarges upon the *King Lear* clue in the notes at the end of the play. The story was in the first place drawn from the chronicles, "but perhaps immediately from an old historical ballad;" which seems to be older than the play, principally because the ballad has "nothing of Shakespeare's nocturnal tempest, which is too striking to have been omitted . . . it has the rudiments of the play, but none of its amplifications."[‡] Warburton's note on "Child Roland to the dark tower came" (*King Lear*, act iii, sc. 7), to the effect that the ballad-maker translated the old title "infans," Johnson corrects by the addition, "This word is in some of our ballads. There is a song of *Child Walter, and a Lady*."[§] Warburton's explanation of "rubrick" in the *Jephthah* passage (*Hamlet*, act ii, sc. 7), as referring to the red-letter titles of old ballads, is cancelled by the statement of the editor that this does not agree with fact.|| In the appendix this view is supported by the testimony of Dr. Gray,

^{*} Shakespeare, *Plays*, ed. Johnson, London, 1765, 8 vols., vol. i, p. 479. Johnson appends his own abridgments of *Il Pecorone* and Boccaccio's tale.

[†] *Ibid.*, appendix (to vol. i, p. 488), vol. viii.

[‡] *Ibid.*, vol. vi, p. 160. Johnson prints the ballad in seventeen stanzas.

[§] *Ibid.*, p. 94. || *Ibid.*, vol. viii, pp. 197, 198.

who had been informed that there were no red letters in the Pepys Collection.* On the two stanzas of *King Stephen* (*Othello*, act ii, sc. 11) Johnson observes that "these stanzas are taken from an old song" (the same term that he used in the *Dictionary*), for which he refers readers to the recently published *Reliques*.† The few other notes on ballads are of no great importance.

Since Shakespeare is under discussion, Capell's treatment of the popular materials may as well be considered here. Though this editor could not forgive Percy his "fore-stalling" him in the matter of *Titus Andronicus*, he still makes the ballad the "ground-work" of the play; "it is, indeed, so like, — that one might be tempted to suspect, that the ballad was form'd upon the play, and not that upon the ballad; were it not sufficiently known, that almost all the compositions of that sort are prior to even the infancy of Shakespeare."‡ *The Merchant of Venice* he is inclined to derive from *Il Pecorone*, though he calls attention also to the ballads on the subject.§

In the *Notes and Various Readings to Shakespeare* (1779–80), followed by *The School of Shakespeare*, he again names the ballad source of *Titus Andronicus*, but with the qualification, "'t is likely, he had also the assistance of that which was the ballad's ground-work, — some barbarous history, the produce of monastic ignorance; "|| the ballad he prints

* Shakespeare, *Plays*, ed. Johnson, London, 1765, 8 vols., appendix, vol. viii.

† *Ibid.*, vol. viii, p. 373.

‡ Shakespeare, *Works*, ed. Capell, London, 1767–68, 10 vols., *Origin of Shakespeare's Fables*, vol. i, pp. 68, 69.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

|| E. Capell, *Notes and Various Readings to Shakespeare*, and *The School of Shakespeare*, London, 1779, etc., 3 vols., vol. ii, Part IV, p. 99.

in *The School of Shakespeare*.^{*} In discussing the *Jephthah* passage in *Hamlet* he refers to the *Reliques* version of the ballad without mentioning the work or its editor by name, but with the statement that in further quotations from or allusions to "a few other songs, such as are connected with Shakespeare, or partially found in him," he will depend upon the "late publication," unless another source is named.[†] "Child Rowland" (*King Lear*), he thinks, "is either really part of some ballad that is not yet discover'd, or else made to resemble one."[‡] "King Stephen" (*Othello*) is a "parcel of a very old song of some merit, and therefore given entire in the '*School's Appendix*.'"§ In the *Addenda* to the *School*, Capell prints *Take thy old Cloak about thee*, and *Willow, willow, willow*, but without naming Percy.|| This course led one "Nugator" to charge him with having used materials from the *Reliques* without due recognition.¶

Johnson and Steevens's edition (1773) rewards investigation from our point of view. Aside from many smaller notes, there are several discussions of ballads in connection with the tracing of sources. As for *The Merchant of Venice*, Steevens regards two Italian novels as the probable originals of the plot.** But immediately after Johnson's abridgment of the novels, the editors insert Warton's opinion as given in the edition of 1765.†† *Titus Andronicus* Steevens

* E. Capell, *Notes and Various Readings to Shakespeare*, and *The School of Shakespeare*, London, 1779, etc., 3 vols., vol. iii, pp. 424-428.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i, Part I, p. 133. ‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i, Part II, p. 169.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, Part III, p. 144. || *Ibid.*, vol. iii, *Addenda*.

¶ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxiii, Part II, p. 704.

** Shakespeare, *Plays*, ed. Johnson and Steevens, London, 1773, 10 vols., vol. iii, p. 111; *Il Pecorone* and Boccaccio's casket story.

†† *Ibid.*, pp. 214-224; Warton's note, pp. 223, 224.

believes to have been drawn from a ballad, "the age of which cannot be exactly determined. The reader who is curious about such a wretched piece, will find the original in Dr. Percy's collection." * *King Lear* hardly came from the ballads dealing with the story, but more definitely from *The True Chronicle History of King Leir* (1605). † *Romeo and Juliet* he derives from the poem, *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, which had been printed by Capell in *The School of Shakespeare*.

It is instructive, in looking back on the successive editions of the dramatist which have come under our view, to note the increasing care of the editors in elucidating the text, and to observe how this exegetical interest combined with the more or less independent research into popular poetry, and other older verse, to identify many of Shakespeare's ballad lines, and to find ballad parallels, if not immediate sources, for several of his plots. As for Johnson himself, about whom Shakespeare scholarship revolved in this period, it is quite clear that he did not permit any bias against the vulgar traditions to affect his editorial integrity; as a matter of fact, he recognized fully that Shakespeare's use of these silly things was altogether in keeping with the ideas of the uninstructed age for which he wrote.

What Johnson might not reveal when the dignity of solemn composition was upon him he could more easily impart in the freer intercourse of his own lionizing circle. Whether or not he was able to forgive the man who put him on the same page with Shenstone is of no great mo-

* Shakespeare, *Plays*, ed. Johnson and Steevens, London, 1773, 10 vols., vol. viii, p. 404.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ix, p. 311.

ment. However that may be, he saw something of Percy several years after the alleged slight upon his deserts in the preface to the *Reliques*. Percy, it appears, submitted to the arbiter his *Hermit of Warkworth* before it was given to the press. In the Reverend Mr. Turner's *Second Johnsonian Letter to the Editor of the New Monthly Magazine* there is a circumstantial account of the occurrence, which leaves no detail untouched. Turner, having found Percy in doleful dumps on account of the treatment Johnson had given his poem, undertook the office of peacemaker. In Johnson's house the conversation turns upon *The Hermit*, and the offending critic admits his part in the affair: "Why, yes, sir, he showed me his poem, but I could give him no great encouragement." On Turner's objecting that it is a "creditable imitation" of the ancient minstrels, the other answers, "Aye, sir, but were they worth imitating?" Turner urges that Percy, by long familiarity with that sort of verse, has acquired an hereditary aptitude for it, in a way not unlike that in which a certain forgotten student of Virgil mastered the Virgilian style. Johnson's answer has the characteristic finality: "Why, yes, sir, and that was something worth acquiring, which cannot be said of the sing-song of your bards." Thereupon, according to Turner's report, "the Doctor, in perfect good humour and glee, crowned the whole by the following ludicrous impromptu: 'Sir, it is an infantine style, which any man may imitate who thinks proper to try, as for instance,

I put my hat upon my head,' " etc.*

* Nichols's *Illustrations*, vol. vi, pp. 159 ff. See Hill's edition of *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, Oxford, 1887, 6 vols., vol. ii, pp. 135, 136, for Johnson's letter to Langton, March 20, 1771, in which he describes Percy's "long ballad in many fits" as "pretty enough."

It is a matter for real regret that Johnson, with his evident talent for this kind of thing, did not leave us several full-blown humorous ballads. The further doings of the hatless man, or the later experiences of the "tender infant," or the outcome of the "mutual slaughter" in which Moor and Christian rolled along down the current of the "glassy water," might have been elaborated with telling effect. This last subject seems to have impressed Boswell as a fitting opening for a serious ballad; but when he remonstrated with Johnson that "this is not ridiculous at all," the poet, who on this occasion treated the ballads "with that ridicule which he always displayed when that subject was mentioned," only made matters worse by answering, "Why no, why should I always write ridiculously?"* As Mrs. Piozzi supplements the anecdote, Johnson accentuated the sarcasm by adding, "Perhaps because I made these verses to imitate such a one, naming him:

Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray," etc.†

The verses written upon the drinking of sixteen cups of tea with "Renny dear" have a more finished air.‡ A study of these sports of Johnson's fancy leads one to ask why he should not have written ridiculously at greater length; as it is, we can only judge of his gifts in this way by the half-dozen torsos that remain. In an aside it may be granted that Percy undoubtedly deserved something of what came to him. Johnson's fun was serviceable as a corrective, though

* *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, vol. ii, pp. 212, 213 n. (A.D. 1773).

† H. L. Piozzi, *Anecdotes of the Late Sam. Johnson*, London, 1786, p. 66.

‡ J. Northcote, *Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, London, 1818, 2 vols., vol. i, p. 81.

it was by no means his intention to make ballad imitation more chaste.

It is certain enough that the publication of *Ossian*, and the developments that followed it, did not tend to make Johnson better disposed toward the ballads. His early judgment that such verse might be written by "many men, many women, and many children"* is even in its terms much like what he said about Percy's popular poetry. The ground of his suspicions of the authenticity of Macpherson's productions and the result of his inquiries are sufficiently uncovered by the account in his *Journey to the Western Islands* (1775), and by Boswell's *Journal* (1785) of the tour.

What sort of reliance Johnson had on the accuracy of tradition, upon which the whole question rested, appears clearly in his generalizing statement: "Written learning is a fixed luminary, which, after the cloud that had hidden it has past away, is again bright in its proper station. Tradition is but a meteor, which, if it once falls, cannot be rekindled."† The application of this axiom to the matter at issue comes out soon after in the categorical decision that "all attempts to find any traces of *Highland* learning" are "hopeless,"‡ and that "there cannot be recovered, in the whole *Earse* language, five hundred lines of which there is any evidence to prove them a hundred years old." Yet "the father of *Ossian*" suppresses his "two chests more of ancient poetry . . . because they are too good for the *English*."§ The editor, or author, of the *Ossian* poems, which "never existed in any other form than that which we have

* *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, vol. i, p. 396 (A.D. 1763).

† S. Johnson, *Journey, Works*, vol. x, p. 454. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 456.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 461

seen," has "doubtless inserted names, that circulate in popular stories, and may have translated some wandering ballads, if any can be found ;" this slight basis of tradition, "by the help of *Caledonian* bigotry," has gained acceptance for the fictions, especially among the Scots ; for "a *Scotchman* must be a very sturdy moralist, who does not love *Scotland* better than truth."*

Boswell's more racy account of the details of this hunting of "the fattiste hartes in all Cheviat" touches in several instances on ballad matters. Thus after Johnson has baited the Reverend Mr. M'Queen as to his knowledge of the Erse originals, he charges him with not himself believing in the authenticity of Macpherson's translations, and, with his usual good humor, brings the auto-da-fé to an end by saying that the *Ossian* verse reminds him of a song, the burden of which was,

Radaratoo, radarate, radara, tadare, tandore.

On Mr. M'Queen's objecting that there were words to it, Johnson quotes a stanza of the ballad, beginning,

O! then bespake the prentices all, etc.,

soon cuts off the other's expatiations on the beauty of *Ossian*, and, as Boswell has it, "with a pleasant smile, only cried, 'Ay, ay; Radaratoo, radarate,' etc."† If such a disposing of *Ossian* and the ballads in one breath could not make Johnson smile pleasantly, he must have been in a very surly mood indeed.

At Lord Elibank's table he found occasion for another

* S. Johnson, *Journey, Works*, vol. x, pp. 462-464.

† J. Boswell, *Journal*, etc., in Hill's *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, vol. v, pp. 240, 241.

pronouncement, which Boswell interprets as an admission that credulity was not only of the Scots. ““He would undertake, (he said) to write an epick poem on the story of Robin Hood, and half England, to whom the names and places he should mention in it are familiar, would believe and declare they had heard it from their earliest years.””*

There is really no vexed question as regards Johnson's relation to the ballads. He remained ruggedly constant to his principles to the last. “He sayd he wold kyll, and cary them away;” and he did what he could. Doubtless, in his later years,

He was war a the doughetie Doglas commynge,
with him a myghtte meany.

But his resistance was not broken. In the *Lives of the Poets* (*Prefaces*, etc., 1779–81) he drew a long bow with the stoutest of hearts. “It is in the power of any man,” he writes of Gray's *Bard*, “to rush abruptly on his subject, that has read the ballad of *Johnny Armstrong*.”† His finding in *Chevy Chase*, for the sake of which Addison had descended to “lower disquisitions,” not “much of either bombast or affectation,” but “chill and lifeless imbecility,”‡ marks his attitude toward one of the best ballads as uncompromisingly adverse. Windham reports that Johnson said, as late as 1784, that “Chevy Chase pleased the vulgar, but did not satisfy the learned; it did not fill a mind capable of thinking strongly.”§ This is much like his earlier comment on

* J. Boswell, *Journal*, etc., in Hill's *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, vol. v, p. 389. See also p. 164.

† Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, ed. Hill, Oxford, 1905, 3 vols., vol. iii, p. 439. Cf. *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, vol. i, p. 403 (A.D. 1763).

‡ Johnson, *Lives*, vol. ii, pp. 147, 148.

§ Johnson, *Letters*, ed. Hill, Oxford, 1892, 2 vols., vol. ii, append. D, p. 440.

Hardyknute, which he openly suspected, that "mere obvious nature may be exhibited with very little power of mind."*

It is somewhat difficult, however, to reconcile the consistent antipathy toward the ballads as illustrated here with Percy's testimony to Boswell that Johnson retained throughout life a fondness for romances of chivalry, and spent much time, during his stay at Percy's parsonage in 1764, in poring over *Felixmarte of Hircania*.† Furthermore, after Johnson had patched up his disagreement with Percy over Pen-
nant (1778), he wrote to Boswell that "Percy's attention to poetry has given grace and splendour to his studies of antiquity."‡ Such a testimonial is not to be laid wholly to personal friendship. Possibly under his conscientious protests against the vulgar form and the lack of moral content in the ballads there lurked some real liking, which gradually became less as he saw with dismay the "endless labour to be wrong" of the poets who were bringing back the "antique ruff and bonnet."§ It is perhaps fortunate for all concerned that he did not live to read the *Lyrical Ballads*.

Johnson's position with respect to the revival of popular poetry was much like that of Holberg. Both, from a commanding station, set their faces against the ballads as a vain thing. Both based their objections on aesthetic and, in a wide sense of the term, moral grounds. Holberg saw in the common traditions a corrupting influence upon historical truth among the learned, a degrading influence upon taste among the vulgar, and, to a lesser degree, a threaten-

* *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, vol. ii, p. 91 (A.D. 1769).

† *Ibid.*, vol. i, pp. 48, 49. ‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iii, pp. 277, 278.

§ Johnson, *Lines written in Ridicule of Certain Poems published in 1777*, *Works*, vol. xi, p. 375.

ing influence upon poetry; Johnson—and this measures the greater effect of the ballads on literature in England—noted with growing uneasiness the interloping of “uncouth words in disarray” into “ode and elegy and sonnet,” and cared very little whether *Chevy Chase* “pleased the vulgar” or not. The sportive anathemas of the one before the appearance of Percy’s work, and of the other after that momentous event, were largely ineffective because of the operation of similar, though at first independent, causes; and, later, because the *Reliques*, while renewing the ancient music of English verse, resounded over-seas, making its homely tones heard in Germany and the Scandinavian countries by men who were prepared to listen and to learn.

In the earlier part of this period the stimulus to a fresh interest in ballad literature in the Scandinavian countries came through *Ossian*. Germany served in part as the mediator. Reference has already been made to Klopstock’s coming to Denmark about the middle of the century. In 1751, he addressed the first five songs of his *Messias* to Frederik V, his chief patron. Through this poet, German influence, which for some time had been gaining head, came into increased ascendancy, though Montesquieu’s *L’Esprit des Lois* (1748), Rousseau’s *Émile* (1761), Voltaire, and the Encyclopaedists found a receptive circle of Danish readers. The Norwegian poet, Tullin, derived inspiration for his very acceptable *Maidagen* (1758), a smooth nature poem, directly from Pope and Young.* It should here be mentioned also that P. H. Mallet came to Denmark in 1752, edited the *Mercure Danois* (1753–60) as a literary link with the

* P. Hansen, *Illustreret dansk Litteraturhistorie*, second edition, Copenhagen, 1902, 3 vols., vol. ii, Part II, pp. 213 ff.

outer world, and wrote the works on Northern history and antiquities (*Introduction*, 1755; *Monumens*, 1756; *Histoire de Dannemarc*, 1758-77) which turned the attention of Scandinavians to the past, as they stimulated Percy's researches. The *Mercure Danois* reviewed a number of English publications; and *Le Traducteur* (1753-57) devoted itself almost exclusively to the translation of essays from *The Rambler* and other English periodicals.

The importance of Klopstock in the founding of a new school in Denmark is marked principally by his influence on Johannes Ewald (1743-81), the first notable poet of Danish romanticism. It was through Gerstenberg's *Schlesvigske Litteraturbreve* (Schleswig and Leipzig, 1766), which dealt very favorably with ballad matters, that Ewald became acquainted with *Ossian*.^{*} He writes to a certain book-dealer, Rothe, September 1, 1769, that his curiosity has been aroused with regard to a German translation of Macpherson's work, and asks for further information.[†] A short time afterward, as appears from a letter of Ewald's to the historian Suhm, Klopstock used his influence in high places to provide for a journey by Ewald into the Highlands of Scotland with a view to gathering popular materials overlooked by Macpherson, and to the Orkneys and Iceland for the purpose of seeking similar traditions.[‡] Nothing came of the project; but the young poet's mind had been

^{*} K. L. Rahbek, *Efterskrift*, in Abrahamson, Nyerup, and Rahbek's *Udvalgte danske Viser*, Copenhagen, 1812-14, 5 vols., vol. v, pp. 107 ff. Rahbek gives excerpts from Gerstenberg's remarks, among them a reference to the *Reliques*.

[†] J. Ewald, *Samtlige Skrifter*, ed. Liebenberg, Copenhagen, 1850-55, 8 pts. Part VIII, p. 166.

[‡] *Ibid.*, pp. 206-208.

directed to Northern subjects, and his later work, chiefly dramatic, shows the persistence of this interest. Thus he wrote a dramatic fragment on Saxo's story of Amleth. The three plays, *Rolf Krage* (1770), *Balders Död* (1775), and *Fiskerne* (1778), very high-flown and Klopstockian in manner, but touched also by Shakespeare, prepared the way for Oehlenschläger's better treatment of saga and romantic subjects. The last-named, operatic drama contains the excellent ballad on the merman motif, entitled *Liden Gunver*, and the classic *Kong Christian stod ved høien Mast*. The song of the Valkyries in *Balders Död* has the same basis as Gray's *Fatal Sisters*.

It is hardly probable that Ewald's imitations were in any way called forth by a communication, printed in one of the Danish periodicals, *Bibliothek for nyttige Skrifter*, 1772, from the pen of Abrahamson, the later collaborator with Nyerup and Rahbek in the editing of the *Udvalgte danske Viser* (1812-14). Yet these remarks are of considerable importance in themselves. Abrahamson, though born of German parents, became a very ardent champion of the Danish language. This interest comes out clearly in his enthusiastic recommendation of the old ballads. He always reads them, he says, with particular interest for their naïveté and the real poetic qualities so often found in them. The ancient measures ring pleasantly upon the ear, an effect that is only increased by their irregularity. They bring out the salient features in the narrative, and leave to the reader the pleasure of divining the rest. This applies, however, only to the older ones; those that originated some time after the beginning of the fifteenth century are for the most part intolerable. It would be well, he suggests further, to revive

the ballad style for lighter treatment of actual contemporary events. To this end the idiom of the old verse, coarse though it sometimes is, should be retained. A certain jovial frankness ought to be combined with correctness in measure and rhyme to produce the happiest effect. The refrains must not be omitted, but may be made to agree better with the content of the poem than is the case in the old ballads. To these observations he adds the wish that some one would undertake to collect what remains of the ancient ballads, and publish them in the oldest available form, with a parallel modern rendering; more especially, an effort should be made to find such as were omitted by Vedel and Syv. In any case, a better edition than the last named is very much to be desired.*

Abrahamson wrote some ballads himself; but his sensible criticism, an early token in the Danish revival, is interesting chiefly in view of the part he himself was to take in bringing out the collection which only Grundtvig's work was to supersede.

Ballads were imitated—in a spirit not very reverent—by the members of the “Norske Selskab,” an informally organized coterie of Norwegian men of letters, resident in Copenhagen, at their often convivial gatherings. This happy band of literati, however, was a real power, and exercised in its graver capacities a restraining influence on the ebullitions of the Ewald school. That it was not wholly averse to popular poetry appears from the competition which it set on foot for a modernization of the Norwegian ballad of *Axel Thorsen og Skjön Valborg*, so much maligned by Holberg. The prize went to P. H. Frimann for a poem under the bal-

* *Bibliothek for nyttige Skrifter*, 1772, No. 25, columns 198, 199.

lad title, which Rahbek later fittingly described as a "Mallet-Shenstonian" production.* The organ of the Society, in which this piece was printed, contained another poem on the same subject, by Miss Charlotta Biehl, giving a revelation of Valborg's feelings after her separation from Axel in a *Brev fra Walborg Immers Datter til hendes Veninde*; neither of the poems is in the ballad form or spirit.† Frimann's verses were of some merit in their way, and received considerable praise. Johann Herman Wessel (1742-1785), however, the most prominent member of the Norwegian Society, is said to have expressed a preference for the simplicity of the original ballad.‡ Wessel, who is particularly remembered for his burlesque on certain turgid dramas of the day in his *Kierlighed uden Strømper* § (1772), wrote an excellent comic ballad, *En Herremand sov engang hen*.

The opinion of another gifted member of the circle, Claus Fasting, a critic by choice and calling, has fortunately been preserved. He says that the ballad has lost nothing by Frimann's treatment: "To excel the original poet in design, force, pithiness, emphasis, in his engaging simplicity and ever increasing interest, would demand more than a master-piece; and the old ballad is undoubtedly a master-piece, since true poetry is always the same, only its form and not its essence, only the language and never the thoughts, be-

* Rahbek and Nyerup, *Bidrag til en Udsigt over dansk Digtekunst under Kong Christian den syvende*, Copenhagen, 1828, p. 369.

† *Poetiske Samlinger udgivne af et Selskab*, 1775, vol. i, pp. 5 ff, 106 ff.

‡ Rasmus Nyerup, *Axel Thorsen og Skjøn Valborg*, Copenhagen, 1809, p. 28.

§ N. M. Petersen found that Wessel had drawn considerably upon Buckingham's *Rehearsal*. See Petersen's *Bidrag til den danske Litteraturs Historie*, second edition, Copenhagen, 1867-71, 5 vols., vol. v, Part II, pp. 315, 316.

ing changeable.”* This judgment may profitably be compared with Warton’s almost contemporaneous exaltation of *The Nut-brown Maid* over Prior’s *Henry and Emma*, soon to be touched upon.

Frequent mention has been made in preceding chapters of the relation of Scandinavian historians to the historical and legendary ballads as presumable evidence. For this period we may give a moment’s attention to P. F. Suhm’s *Critisk Historie af Danmark* (1774–81), which deals with the oldest kings, from Odin to Gorm. He is disposed to take the ballads rather seriously, but does not accept their testimony without careful scrutiny. In discussing several of the quasi-historical characters in Syv’s ballad, *Langbeen Risers og Vidrich Verlandsens Kamp*, and the conflicting claims for various localities to the honor of being counted the residence of these heroes, he remarks that all this only indicates how the ancient poets and historians confused persons, times, and places, simply for the purpose of introducing into one work as many renowned warriors as possible.† To give one more instance, he notices the various theories regarding the localization of the events treated in the ballad of *Hagbard og Signe*, and is inclined to think that the name “Sigersted” in Denmark may have been given to the locality by those who thought the tragedy had occurred there; but he does not question the historicity of the ballad.‡

This period in Denmark is thus notable for an increased

* *Den kritiske Tilskuer*, Nos. 37 and 38, 1775, quoted by Rahbek and Nyerup, *Bidrag til en Udsigt over dansk Digtekunst under Kong Christian den syvende*, p. 205.

† P. F. Suhm, *Critisk Historie af Danmark*, Copenhagen, 1774–81, 4 vols., vol. ii, pp. 851, 852.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iii, pp. 253, 254.

disposition to regard the ballads as literature, and to use them for literary purposes. Abrahamson's call for a new collection was answered in a small way by the issuance of a book of *Levninger af Middel-Alderens Digtekunst* in 1780; this, however, may be taken up later in connection with a supplementary volume that appeared in 1784.

No ballad collections were sent out during these years in Sweden or Finland. For our purposes the two countries may be considered under one head, since the Finnish matters that concern us were for the most part put forth in Swedish or in the common medium of Latin. The general temper of the time was not very favorable to popular verse, but strongly inclined toward the elegant in literature and art. It was a period of active intellectualism, however, and the organization of various learned and polite societies after English and French models—latterly the Swedish Academy of 1786—did not tend altogether away from ballad interests. This was the more the case because the strongest literary influences, aside from those of French origin, arose in England. *La nouvelle Héloïse* came early into great popularity, but, strangely enough, was not translated. Among important English works which were turned into Swedish were *Tom Jones* (1765), *Joseph Andrews* (1779), *Sir Charles Grandison* (1770), *Pamela* (1783), and *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1782). Lillo's *London Merchant* (*George Barnwell*) had been translated in 1767 from a French version; the Swedish rendering soon found great favor on the stage in the capital and elsewhere.*

Ossian gained a foothold very early in Sweden, and through the century had perhaps a stronger and more

* Schück and Warburg, *Ill. svensk litteraturhistoria*, vol. ii, pp. 504-510.

continuous influence than in Denmark. Gothenius's *Göteborgska veckobladet* (1763-65) and *Göteborgska magazin* (1765-66) performed the pioneer work of commentary and translation.* Gothenius translated also Thomson's *Seasons* into prose. His labors were thus of considerable importance for the new British influence.

As early as 1766, H. G. Porthan began to gather in Finland the floating traditions which, through the later work of Castrén and Lönnrot, were combined into the national epic, *Kalevala*.† Porthan was a systematic student, and between 1766 and 1778 wrote a series of dissertations *De Poësi Fennica*, which made him an authority in the subject. Though Blanck doubts that Porthan knew *Ossian* when he began these researches,‡ the later dissertations refer to Macpherson by name. The author has come to regard the rune-singers as bards, notes the similarity between Finnish and Scottish extemporizing enthusiasm, and remarks, in discussing the common operation of tradition: "Maxime admirandum est, quod cum longiora saepe carmina composuerunt, scribendi licet arte destituti, exacte tamen eadem in memoria retineant, eaque sola custode inter se propagent." Yet he adds that the Finns have sometimes deliberately emended their traditions.§

His description of the "runot" is of particular interest. These "carmina," he says, "monocola semper sunt, sive uniformia, et versibus constant, quorum singuli octo recipiunt syllabas, quae si plures quando aut pauciores adfue-

* Theodor Hasselquist, "*Ossian*" i den svenska dikten och litteraturen, Malmö, 1895, p. 41.

† *Ibid.*, p. 38.

‡ A. Blanck, *Den nordiska renässansen*, Stockholm, 1911, pp. 274 ff.

§ H. G. Porthan, *De Poësi Fennica*, Åbo, 1766-78, pp. 60, 61.

rint, vitiosae id tribuendum licentiae." The lines he quotes by way of example are rhymed in couplets, but, unlike the ballads, are not in stanzas.*

J. H. Kellgren, a disciple of Porthan, in his early and rather immature academic dissertation, *De Poesi, Philosophia ubi-vis Gentium Praevia*, discusses British and French ancient poetry together, as having a Celtic origin. He speaks very highly of *Ossian*. The chiefs, he observes, kept bards, "qui . . . res gestas carminibus celebrarent atque posterorum memoriae mandarent. Pretiosissimae jam nobis supersunt horum Poëmatum reliquiae, ab *Ossiano*, *Fingalis* filio, compositae, sola traditione per ora, cum musica conjuncta, in nostra usque tempora perpetuatae. Leguntur autem haecce maxima cum voluptate Poëmata, nec ulla, nisi sola brevitatis, ratione Homericis scriptis inferiora, si quid in me est iudicii, censenda sunt."†

Kellgren translated a part of *Ossian* in 1775.‡ Thomas Thorild, a young Rousseauan poet, learned to know and admire Macpherson's work in 1776-77, wrote a little later the poem *Ossian*, and involved himself in controversy with Kellgren by an enthusiastic advocacy of unrhymed poetry. Clewberg-Edelcrantz translated *Ossian* in 1777; in his descriptive poem, *Hösten* (1781), and his *Ode til svenska folket* (1786), he showed a strong influence from Gray and the English Miltonians.§ Both Thorild and Kellgren, in their later poetry, were deeply indebted to English writers, as were Oxenstierna and Adlerbeth.

* H. G. Porthan, *De Poësi Fennica*, Åbo, 1766-78, pp. 6, 7.

† J. H. Kellgren, *De Poesi, Philosophia ubi-vis Gentium Praevia*, Åbo, 1774, pp. 21 ff.

‡ Hasselquist, "*Ossian*," etc., pp. 75 ff.

§ Blanck, *Den nordiska renässansen*, pp. 324 ff.

The *Reliques*, though not unknown, does not seem to have been familiar to Scandinavian readers in this period. Perhaps this accounts in part for the apparently slight interest in ballads in Sweden. The fire was yet to be brought from Germany. In 1774 came Bürger's *Lenore*, and in 1778 the first volume of Herder's *Volkslieder*, both resting on the *Reliques*. In the same year the *Kjöbenhavnske nye Efterretninger* reviewed Ursinus's *Balladen und Lieder altenglischer und altschottischer Dichtart* (1777), mostly taken from Percy, but with some new materials translated by Herder and others. Part of the review is worth quoting for its comparison of English and Danish ballad history. "Popular poetry," the writer observes, "is relished by every one who looks for what is touching and interesting in the poet's art. We have a proof of this in our old heroic ballads ['Kiempeviser']. They have been mutilated by being sung for several generations before being printed, by the errors of copyists, and, finally, by the short-sighted zeal of editors, through which the best passages often have suffered for the sake of an archaic word, or at times simply because the editor failed to understand a passage and felt impelled to alter it. Nevertheless, they are still read with much enjoyment. . . . In the work before us are presented some songs of the same kind, but in a less mutilated state, since in England the ballads were more highly regarded than among us, and for a long time a distinct order of people existed, who went about and sang them to attentive listeners." The following words are of particular interest as showing that there were those in Denmark who were acquainted with the ballads in English. "These translations, of course," the reviewer concludes, "are only for such as are unable to

read the originals, which, by their poetic value, by their incomparable naïveté, and by their rhymes, far excel even the best translations.”* The more general adoption of the ballad form for art poetry in Scandinavian literature must be taken up in the next chapter, in which a considerable body of material will be discussed.

In English poetry the form was already rather familiar before the appearance of the *Reliques*. Naturally enough, Percy's collection stimulated such production. To the earlier examples in *Edwin and Angelina* and *The Hermit of Warwick* something should be added to give, not a complete, but a fairly representative view of this part of the subject. The two poems I have chosen for more particular examination have great critical interest because in each case we know just what the poet was trying to do, something which cannot be said of the work of the average balladist or parodist.

Sir James the Ross was written by Michael Bruce, a Scotsman, who died in the year of his majority, 1767. He called his poem “An historical ballad.” This is of some importance because he left a formal definition of the historical ballad, as distinguished from the song, admirable for its clearness and apparent originality. “*The Historical Ballad*,” he says, “is a species of writing by itself. The common people confound it with the *Song*, but in truth they are widely different. A *Song* should never be historical. It is founded generally on some one thought, which must be prosecuted and exhibited in every light, with a quickness and turn of expression peculiar to itself. The *Ballad*, again, is founded on some passage of history, or (what suits its nature better) of

* *Kjöbenhavnske nye Efterretninger om lærde Sager*, March 12, 1778.

tradition. Here the poet may use his liberty, and cut and carve as he has a mind. I think it a kind of writing remarkably adapted to the Scottish language.”* This is practically the distinction which Shenstone suggested privately, which Percy ignored, and which Ritson later made public. *Sir James the Ross* is a good exemplification of the poet’s theories. It is a straight narrative of love, jealousy, revenge, and death, not overlaid with ornament, not “elegant,” but of a decent simplicity.

Bruce wrote other poems in ballad stanzas, among them the *Danish Ode*: “The great, the glorious deed is done!” Another *Danish Ode* is in a six-line stanza of the same rhythm.

In the case of Chatterton’s *Bristowe Tragedie; or, the Dethe of Syr Charles Bawdin* (printed in 1772), ballad peculiarities are used to a greater extent, and to far better purpose, than in Bruce’s poem. In the first place, the poem is a clear and vivid narrative; it is of the “good-night” type, only elaborating the final scene to the exclusion of the events which led up to the sentence of the offender. The lengthy dialogue and Syr Charles’s declamation are not in the ballad vein, nor is the splendid pageantry of the death procession. The style, apart from the affectations of diction, has the ballad naïveté in a marked degree. The poet has even taken thought for certain of the more special technical features. Thus, in the procession to the scaffold, Chatterton marshals the friars of St. Augustine, and

Behind their backs six minstrels came,
Who tuned the strung bataunt.

Presently come the friars of St. James, and after them again

* M. Bruce, *Poetical Works*, ed. Stephen, Paisley, 1895, pp. 152 ff.

six minstrels tuning the strung bataunt.* The simple dignity of this ballad, despite the earmarks of art, may be compared to advantage with a tolerable example of the more usual sort of imitation in W. J. Mickle's *Hengist and Mey* (1770) or his *Sorceress*,† one of the earlier horror ballads. A further contrast is to be seen in Blacklock's *The Graham*, "an heroic ballad,"‡ in four cantos of eight-line stanzas, distinctly elevated in tone; according to Anderson, the poem was written to conciliate South and North Britain.§

The Critical Review, August, 1778, in commenting on Chatterton's *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*, gives an illustrative expression of the increased respect for the survivals of antiquity by accompanying its reservations on the matter of the authenticity of Rowley with the severe statement: "He deserves to be branded as the worst of impostors, *who obtrudes anything upon the world, under the venerable name of antiquity, which has not an honest title to that character.*" || Warton, it will be remembered, in *The History of English Poetry* reviews Chatterton's work at some length, and decides that the poet had forged the poems by the aid of a Chaucer glossary and of Percy's ballads. ¶ The prayer for the prosperity of the king, in the last stanza of *Syr Charles Barwdin*, and the general character of the verse indicate clearly Chatterton's indebtedness to *Chevy Chase (B)*. The whole of his work testified strikingly to the powerful effect

* T. Chatterton, *Poetical Works*, ed. Skeat, London, 1871, 2 vols., vol. ii, pp. 1-18.

† Anderson, *The Works of the British Poets*, vol. xi, pp. 659 ff.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 1212 ff. § *Ibid.*, p. 1156.

|| *The Critical Review*, vol. xlvi, p. 115.

¶ T. Warton, *The History of English Poetry*, London, 1774-81, 3 vols., and part of a fourth, vol. ii, pp. 139-164, and addenda.

of antiquarian research, and in turn stimulated collectors and poets.

Before leaving the subject of ballad influence on poetry, we may turn attention to a poem which is in no sense an imitation, but which was produced as a result of ballad inspiration, or something akin to it. Beattie states in the advertisement to the first book of *The Minstrel* (1771) that the suggestion for the work came from Percy's *Essay on the Minstrels*. In the poet's own essay on *Poetry and Music* (written in 1762) there is a passage which outlines almost exactly the trend of thought that lies at the bottom of the poem. To illustrate the development of taste from rudeness to elegance the writer employs the ballad in a manner distinctly reminiscent of Hume, Burke, and Goldsmith. "A peasant thinks the hall of his landlord the finest apartment in the universe, listens with rapture to the strolling ballad-singer, and wonders at the rude wooden cuts that adorn his rude compositions;"* with larger information and experience come higher standards and attainments. This seems to me to be the germinal idea of *The Minstrel*. In the first book the poet shows the youth brought up at the feet of Nature, and nurtured by ancient traditions.

Her legends when the Beldam 'gan impart,
Or chant the old heroic ditty o'er,
Wonder and joy ran thrilling to his heart.

He heard the tale of *The Nut-brown Maid*, and drew a moral from the affecting story of *The Babes in the Wood*.†

In the second book (1774) the poet takes the minstrel boy

* J. Beattie, *Essays*, Edinburgh, 1776, *Poetry and Music*, Part I, chap. iii, p. 390.

† Beattie, *The Minstrel*, sixth edition, London, 1779, Book I, pp. 22-24.

into higher regions of knowledge and experience, in which hereceives the finished tuition that makes him as respectable and eminent in his calling as any of Percy's ballad-makers.

Beattie, following Percy, makes his minstrel both poet and musician. Not so Charles Burney, who discusses this subject at some length in his *General History of Music*, the first volume of which appeared in 1776. While he holds that "poetry and music, in the early ages of those arts, were so much united, that all the lyric, elegiac, and even epic Bards, were necessarily and professedly musicians,"* he has another opinion with regard to the later members of the craft in England. "Though the word *Minstrel*," he says, "in our language is confined to a musician who plays on instruments, yet the term *Jonglerie*, in old French, included four different species of performers: the *Troubadours*, who wrote, set, and sung their own verses; the *Singers*, employed by those poets and composers to whom nature had denied a voice; the *Diseurs*, *Narrators*, or *Romancers*, who in a kind of chant recited their metrical histories; and the *Players upon Instruments*, who accompanied the troubadours and singers, or performed at feasts and revels without singing. These last exercised the art of minstrelsy so often mentioned by our poets."† The divergence from Percy's view is quite clear.

Warton lays but one ballad to minstrel authorship in *The History of English Poetry*. On the whole, he discusses the popular ballads rather less than one would expect from his early interest in them, and from his connection with

* C. Burney, *A General History of Music*, London, 1776-89, 4 vols., vol. i, p. 358.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii (1782), p. 266.

Percy, to whom, it may be remarked in passing, he had written, as early as 1765, that he had the materials ready for the projected *History*.^{*} The minstrels he mentions rather frequently in various connections. In the *Dissertation on the Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe* he holds that the Scandinavian scalds, of whose works he makes some particular mention, learned in France the Oriental stories which they later carried into England with the Norman conquerors. The Saxon bards, with the progress of civilization, lost the character which they originally had in common with the Scandinavian pagans. "Yet their national love of verse and music still so strongly predominated, that in place of their old scalds a new rank of poets arose, called Gleemen or Harpers. These probably gave rise to the order of English Minstrels, which flourished till the sixteenth century." In the closing paragraph of the dissertation he suggests further that the Gothic (Scandinavian) scalds, who prepared Europe for the reception of romance, may have got some of their material directly from Oriental sources; but whether these fictions came in one way or another, they were kept up by troubadours and minstrels, and through Turpin and Geoffrey of Monmouth reached the Italian poets and, eventually, Spenser.

Though Warton in the *History* notes particularly one of Richard I's French minstrels, who "united the professions of music and verse,"[†] and assents to Percy's view as to the early exchange of compositions between French and English minstrels,[‡] I have not found here or elsewhere that he laid the composition of any ballad to English mem-

^{*} *Percy-Farmer Correspondence*, Percy to Farmer, July 2, 1765, p. 56 verso.

[†] Warton, *History*, vol. i, p. 117. [‡] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

bers of the order. But one ballad he ascribes definitely to a Scots minstrel. In connection with his discussion of *Duncane Laidir, or Makgregor's Testament* he remarks: "Some readers may perhaps be of opinion, that Macgregor was one of those Scottish lairds, who lived professedly by rapine and pillage: a practice greatly facilitated, and even supported by the feudal system. Of this sort was Edom o' Gordon, whose attack on the castle of Dunse is recorded by the Scotch minstrels in a pathetic ballad (of questionable antiquity) which begins thus:

It fell about the Martinmas,
Quhen the wind blew schril and cauld," etc.*

The most significant thing in Warton's criticism, as it concerns us here, is his detailed comparison between *The Nut-brown Maid* and *Henry and Emma*. At the outset he dates the poem about a hundred years later than Prior had placed it, deciding on linguistic grounds that "it was not written earlier than the beginning, at least, of the sixteenth century." His aesthetic scruples are far more serious. It is very refreshing, after the much laudation of Prior's excellencies in this matter, to find Warton turning the tables completely, praising the original most warmly, and crying down the "decorated and dilated" adaptation as having taken the asperity from the man's character, minimized compassion for the woman, and thus weakened the effectiveness of the final disclosure.† Such a judgment as this illustrates well one side of the service Warton performed through his work in general and through the *History* in

* Warton, *History*, vol. ii, p. 332. For other references to ballad subjects, see vol. i, pp. 43-46, 57; vol. ii, p. 138 n.; vol. iii, pp. 96, 97, 206-208, 430.

† *Ibid.*, vol. iii, pp. 135-141.

particular. More important, even from our restricted point of view, than his contribution to ballad learning was the light he threw on mediaeval literature as a whole, of which, by his tokens alone, popular poetry was no inconsiderable part. There is no good cause to regret that Warton became "a faithless truant to the classic page," and chose instead the "Gothic" studies which drew from him the confession, in the sonnet written on a blank leaf of Dugdale's *Monasticon*:

Nor rough, nor barren, are the winding ways
Of hoar antiquity, but strown with flow'rs.

In a more specialized manner Tyrwhitt's edition of *The Canterbury Tales* (1775-78) turned to the same end. We need not stop to dilate on the value of the work in bringing Chaucer back to his own. Nor can we make a detailed appraisal of the illustrative material which the industry of the editor brought together. The rather few ballad notes are soon disposed of. In the *Introductory Discourse*, Tyrwhitt holds that *The Wife of Bathes Tale* was taken from Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, or "perhaps from an older narrative, in the *Gesta Romanorum* or some such collection," deferentially contradicts Percy's view that the source was *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, but suggests that the ballad may "have been composed by one who had read both Gower and Chaucer."* The caution in *The Clerkes Tale* against permitting it to be written of the "noble wyves," whom Chaucer addresses in his *Envoy*,

As of Griseldis patient and kinde,
Lest Chichevache you swalwe in hire entraille,

* Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Tyrwhitt, London, 1775-78, 5 vols., vol. iv, pp. 153, 154. For observations on *Sir Hugh*, see vol. iv, p. 174 n.

Tyrwhitt explains by the help of a "ballad" of *Bicorne* and *Chichevache*. "The first is supposed to feed upon *obedient husbands*, and the other upon *patient wives*; and the humour of the piece consists in representing *Bicorne* as pampered with a superfluity of food, and *Chichevache* as half starved."* Tyrwhitt does not commit himself to any opinion as to the merit of the ballads he discusses.

Knox's essay *On the Prevailing Taste for the Old English Poets* (1779) attaches itself naturally to this part of the discussion as a sort of commentary on the kind of work done by Warton and Tyrwhitt; more particularly, it serves for a summary of the growth of interest in ballads up to the writer's time. Knox was undoubtedly right in laying the new devotion to older poetry to the same "antiquarian spirit" that had eagerly investigated "the manners, the buildings, the records, and the coins" of earlier generations. "The popular ballad composed by some illiterate minstrel, and which has been handed down by tradition for several centuries, is rescued from the hands of the vulgar, to obtain a place in the collection of a man of taste." Here he speaks from the point of view of the "curious." Yet he confesses that "these old ballads, which are in the mouths of peasants on both sides the Tweed, have something in them irresistibly captivating. Vulgar, coarse, inelegant, they yet touch the heart. Many of them, when read as the writers intended, are musical." Addison, he thinks, used a mistaken method in his treatment of them. Though the parallels he drew were not unjust, it would have been a better judgment of the ballads to "view them as originals, and, in order to procure them a general reception, appeal to the genuine feelings of

* Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, vol. iv, pp. 280, 281 n.

nature." By any other standard, "the barbarous language in which they are written makes them appear to disadvantage." Despite their merits, "it may be doubted, whether any of them would be tolerated as the production of a modern. . . . There are few who do not read Dr. Percy's own piece, and those of other late writers, with more pleasure than the oldest ballad in the collection of that ingenious writer."* There is little reason to question that Knox's comprehensive criticism, both in its allowance and its disallowance, represented the greater part of contemporary opinion.

Just because of the prevalence of such ideals, it is with a feeling of thankfulness that one notes, in surveying the ballad publications of the period, that the rage for improvement was not all-inclusive. David Herd was most exceptional for treating his materials with a respect based upon real appreciation of the merits of the old songs. Fortunately, though he came under Percy's influence, particularly through Paton, Herd did not follow the method of the editor of the *Reliques*. Unfortunately, on the other hand, he did not give so clear an expression as Percy to such theories as he may have had on ballad matters.

According to his preface to the first volume of the *Ancient and Modern Scots Songs, Heroic Ballads*, etc. (1769), Herd originally intended, after Percy, to supply the collection with notes; but he announces that these are to be postponed with a view to their inclusion in the proposed second volume. The most interesting feature of the preface is the definite association of the music with the poetry. "The characteristical excellence of both," he holds, "is nearly the same,

* Vicesimus Knox, *Essays, Moral and Literary*, second edition, London, 1779, 2 vols., vol. i, pp. 290-296.

viz., a forcible and pathetic simplicity, which at once lays hold on the affections; so that the heart itself may be considered as the *instrument* which the Bard or Minstrel harmonizes, touching all its strings in the most delicate and masterly manner." This is no mere fine sentiment, but a genuine declaration that this editor approached his work in a true lyric mood, and not as a prying antiquarian of the kind Johnson referred to as a "rugged being."*

The collection contains, again according to the preface, in its first part, songs gleaned from various miscellanies, among them Percy's; in the second, such as had not before been printed, "together with the larger ballads and poems. The former is subdivided by their titles in the order of the alphabet, and the latter by separate classes." These classes are not further specified. In the arrangement of the material the ballads are not kept altogether apart from the songs, but sufficiently distinguished to show that Herd had a sense of the difference. Some idea of the value of his contributions may be had from the inclusion in Child's collection of about a dozen numbers from this volume, among them *Tam Lin*, *Clerk Colvill*, and a variant of *Sir Patrick Spens*.

Paton sent a copy of the book to Percy, who, in acknowledging the gift, February 9, 1769, offered certain suggestions for the notes to be inserted in the second volume; they should include information as to author, antiquity, tradition, history, topography, and miscellaneous comments to "illustrate any allusions to the old manners, customs, opinions, or idioms of the ancient Scotch-nation."† Some

* *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. Hill, vol. iii, p. 278.

† Hans Hecht, *Songs from David Herd's MSS.*, Edinburgh, 1904, pp. 10-13.

years later, in a letter to Paton, quoted above, Percy offered to repair some of the fragments for Herd's second volume. Herd, as it appears, did not act upon either of these proposals.

In the two volume edition of 1776 there is but little more critical material than in the first. The somewhat enlarged preface has the following significant statement: "The Editor hath not attempted to reduce the language to the orthography of the times in which the several pieces may be supposed to have been written. This was a task for which he found himself unqualified."* Fortunately, he found himself unqualified for other less defensible changes. To be sure, he did make some slight alterations in more than half of the numbers taken over from the first volume. According to J. B. Murdoch's collation, they were of no great importance, consisting largely of changes in spelling toward an older orthography. The rest of the material was not touched.† As Gilpin has pointed out, however, Herd "foolishly and injudiciously" combined various elements to form his version of *Flodden Field*.‡ But this is a peccadillo, in view of the uniform excellence of his work. The second edition has three subdivisions: "heroic ballads or epic tales;" "sentimental, pastoral, and love songs;" and "comic, humorous, and jovial songs." It contains a good deal of additional material, from which Child reaped another dozen

* D. Herd, *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads, etc.*, second edition, Edinburgh, 1776, 2 vols., vol. i, p. viii.

† Herd, *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, etc.*, Glasgow, 1869, 2 vols., reprint of the edition of 1776, F. J. Child's copy, in Harvard College Library, containing Murdoch's collation of Herd's editions.

‡ Herd, *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, etc.*, reprint of the edition of 1776, ed. S. Gilpin, Edinburgh, 1870, 2 vols., vol. i, p. 317.

texts, among them versions of *The Cruel Brother*, *The Cruel Mother*, and *Lizie Wan*.

Herd, though he wrote little about the ballads, did a great and good work as a diligent collector and faithful editor. Ritson, Scott, and their successors profited much by his labors. From his manuscripts, recently published in part by Hecht, Child drew some twenty texts, *Babylon* and *The Bonny Hind* among them. Dalrymple's (Lord Hailes) *Ancient Scottish Poems* (1770), a selection of pieces from the Bannatyne manuscript in their original state, to take the place of Ramsay's inaccurate texts in *The Evergreen*, was another encouraging sign of the new tendency.

Aikin's *Essays on Song-Writing: with a Collection of . . . English Songs*, etc. (1772), must receive some detailed notice. "A Song," according to his definition, is "a short piece, divided into returning portions of measure, and formed upon a single incident, thought or sentiment." * He makes three divisions. "The rude original pastoral poetry of our country furnishes the first class in the popular pieces called ballads. These consist of the village tale, the dialogue of rustic courtship, the description of natural objects, and the incidents of a rural life;" both language and sentiment must be simple. The second class is made up of poems "containing the sentimental part of the former, abstracted from the tale and rural landscape, and improved by a more studied observation of the internal feelings of passion and their external symptoms." In the third class, "the sentiments arise from cool reflection and curious speculation, rather than from

* John Aikin, *Essays on Song-Writing: with a Collection of . . . English Songs*, etc., second edition, London, 1774, p. 12.

present emotion ; ” their construction is therefore more artificial.*

In the *Essay on Ballads and Pastoral Songs* he seems to be thinking chiefly of the heroic ballads, since his characterization of the type departs somewhat from that given above ; here he describes them as recounting mainly deeds of war, “ and the wonderful adventures of the legendary saint and knight errant.” † He announces that it is not his intention to collect the older ballads, and proceeds to give some sensible directions for the making of modern imitations ; yet he takes no adequate account of the specific technical peculiarities. Simplicity in thought and style, to the avoidance of both vulgarity and over-refinement, are his principal requirements.‡

The collection consists of a number of the better ballad imitations and of songs ; the arrangement shows a good sense of distinctions, though the demarcation between types is not always clear.

Evans’s *Old Ballads* (1777) requires no lengthy discussion, since his critical material is of no great consequence. In the preface he quotes passages from Aikin’s *Essay on Ballads*, and offers a few remarks on the advantage of preserving popular poetry.§ His material is gathered largely from older miscellanies, and from other printed sources not usually of the best. Some numbers are from the *Old Ballads* of 1723–25 ; Evans seems to have followed the editor of that collection in his notes, which are of little importance.

* John Aikin, *Essays on Song-Writing : with a Collection of . . . English Songs*, etc., second edition, London, 1774, pp. 22, 23.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 27. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 28–31.

§ Thomas Evans, *Old Ballads, Historical and Narrative, with Some of Modern Date*, London, 1777, 2 vols.

The arrangement in the first edition is mainly according to the time of the events celebrated in the pieces. Both the arrangement and the contents of the added two volumes in the second edition (1784) give evidence of hasty and indiscriminate compilation. Among the things "now first printed" is *Cumnor Hall*,* associated with Scott's *Kenilworth*. Further, he includes Downman's translation of *The Death Song of Ragnar Lodbrach*, which, however, is not in a ballad stanza.† A number of older and newer imitations are included. The collection, while not distinguished for the quality of its materials, made accessible a goodly store of texts, printed and unprinted; it is particularly rich in *Robin Hood* ballads.

The Critical Review and *The Monthly Review* received Evans's contributions with moderate approval.‡ The *Kjöbenhavnske nye Efterretninger* later compared both the selections and the critical apparatus very unfavorably with the *Reliques*. "That diligence and care in supplying critical information," says the reviewer, "and that discrimination in the choice of selections according to their beauty or value in other respects, which gives Dr. Percy's collection its greatest worth, is here altogether missing." §

It was, indeed, no easy matter for any editor to come after Percy. The *Reliques* had supplied a want, and supplied it satisfactorily in the main, as the three editions within ten years testify. Percy's work had the natural effect of bring-

* Evans, *Old Ballads*, etc., second edition, London, 1784, 4 vols., vol. iv, pp. 130 ff.

† *Ibid.*, vol. iii, pp. 108 ff.

‡ *The Critical Review*, April 1777, vol. xliii, p. 313; *The Monthly Review*, July, 1777, vol. lvii, pp. 77, 78.

§ *Kjöbenhavnske nye Efterretninger*, December 3, 1778.

ing to expression contrasted views on the whole matter. Except for Johnson, and a few like-minded with him, the general sentiment was distinctly favorable to the ballads. Imitations became more numerous, and drew nearer to the narrative qualities of the models, though the poets still failed to catch the ballad tone, as appears in the attempts of Goldsmith, Percy, and to a lesser extent, Chatterton. The recognition of the essential narrative foundation, however, is an important advance over Shenstone's ideas as marked in his *Pastoral Ballad*. It is interesting to note that Shenstone's later distinction between story ballad and lyric song was clearly stated and exemplified early in this period by Bruce. Aside from this, theoretical discussion revolved principally about the question of ballad authorship. Percy's doctrine of the minstrels naturally drew most attention, and Burney and Warton hinted the contradiction which Ritson was so forcefully to emphasize. Beattie's *Minstrel*, a noteworthy poetic record of the debate, gave a sincere testimonial to Percy. Knox's essay was in the main an echo of Percy's aesthetics, and in a great measure indicative of popular recognition of his views. The Shakespeare editors, also, gave him his due; their increasing cautiousness in allowing ballad origin for certain of the plays was no sign of ill-will toward popular poetry, but rather an evidence of the advancing knowledge of mediaeval literature, toward which ballad research had contributed not a little. Tyrwhitt and Warton, above all, marking conspicuously the strength of the growing interest in older literature, sent out new and powerful influences aimed in the same direction. The wide bearing of the whole movement was patently attested by the effect of *Ossian* and, to a lesser degree in this period, of the *Reliques*

in giving impetus to the reviving appreciation of popular poetry in the Scandinavian countries. The independent tradition still survived in Denmark, and doubtless would have gained clearer expression even in the absence of outside influence; to a less degree the same might be said for Sweden; but British contributions speeded the day. Johnson, to be sure, set his face against the ballads, *Ossian*, and the Scots; but even his opposition was a testimony to the power of the coming change. While he sat firm on his throne, the tide rolled in. As for the Scots, comparatively silent in this period, they had their Dalrymple and their Herd, who spoke little but builded well.

CHAPTER VII

THE DANISH RELICS TO THE SWEDISH BALLADISTS

PINKERTON TO SCOTT, 1780-1802

SCOTTISH interest in popular poetry, which had taken on new life through the work of Herd, underwent a development of extraordinary vigor and variety in the period that preceded the publication of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. It seems as if the Scots were filled with a determination to assert the value of their rich inheritance of verse and music. The publications to be considered are curiously disparate in quality, but in compass quite respectable. Pinkerton's various productions require a good share of discussion. Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* is memorable for its attention to the popular melodies. The verses of Burns mark the literary bearing of the previous accumulation of poetic stores. In England *The Lyrical Ballads* represent a similar influence. The English editor, Ritson, to be sure, is of far greater significance than his Scottish rival, Pinkerton; but in spite of Ritson's antipathy to the Scots, he brought out a collection of *Scottish Songs*, and prepared *The Caledonian Muse*, which, however, was not published till several years after his death. All in all, the weight of production and of criticism lies decidedly on the Scottish side. This is the more interesting and important in view of the culmination of the whole movement, English as well as Scottish, in the editorial and literary work of Walter Scott.

On taking up for consideration the first of Pinkerton's ballad publications, the *Scottish Tragic Ballads* (1781), we must record not only the general influence of the *Reliques*,

but some personal direction from Percy himself. Certain excerpts from the correspondence of the two have already been given, showing that Percy at one time intended to publish the fictitious second part of *Hardyknute*, which Pinkerton had submitted to him, but that later, possibly on grounds of suspicion, Percy counselled the author to publish the poem himself. One or two further citations will indicate how far Percy was directly concerned with Pinkerton's first volume. March 17, 1780, Percy writes to Pinkerton, suggesting Dodsley as a publisher; whereupon he adds: "At the same time you may mention, that my present avocations having caused me to delay any intended additions to my former three volumes, you are inclined to print your pieces in a separate publication, with my entire approbation; that you understand I shall be in town about the middle of April; that I shall be then ready to deliver up your manuscript, and shall be very willing to correct the press." * Later, January 11, 1781, he writes to express his satisfaction that Pinkerton is able to superintend the publication himself; he says further, however: "I shall now be happy to observe the progress of the press, and will with great pleasure obey any commands of yours respecting it." † In spite of the courteous tone of these communications, it may be that Percy was not very zealous in this cause.

An opinion from another correspondent may be adduced for its own sake and for its relation to the present matter. Pinkerton, it appears, had applied to Beattie for assistance. Beattie answers, June 20, 1778, that all the Scottish poetry of merit that he has seen is already in print; "All the poetry in the Scottish dialect that deserves to be handed down to pos-

* Nichols's *Illustrations*, vol. viii, p. 97. † *Ibid.*, p. 98.

terity, might be comprised in two or three small volumes.”* If one were determined to cover fraud with a fig-leaf, Beattie’s chilling letter might be held a partial excuse for Pinkerton’s improvisations, which then could be regarded as having been undertaken of a sincere heart for the magnifying of Scottish letters. However, the uncharitable accuser, who virtuously berated Allan Ramsay and the “ingenious young gentlemen” that assisted him in trimming *The Evergreen*, must not be clothed in soft apologies.

Pinkerton’s fabrications were at once so naïve and so studied that one does not know what most to marvel at, the assurance which hoped to escape detection or, supposing another motive, the sense of humor which staked so much on a hoax. The second part of *Hardyknute*, longer by a dozen stanzas than the first part, is far less popular in tone than Lady Wardlaw’s and Ramsay’s original. Yet Pinkerton gravely denies Lady Wardlaw’s authorship, and assigns “the end of the fifteenth century as the date of the antique parts of this noble production.”† Other pieces, such as *The Laird of Woodhouselie*, *Lord Livingston*, *The Death of Menteith*, and *Binnorie*, his own almost wholly, he describes as being “from tradition.” Some numbers drawn from Percy were also “corrected” by Pinkerton. “But it is the painful, though most necessary duty of an Editor,” he says, in a note to *Flodden Field*, concerning certain stanzas added by earlier versifiers, “by the touchstone of truth, to discriminate such dross from the gold of antiquity.”‡

* J. Pinkerton, *Literary Correspondence*, ed. Turner, London, 1830, 2 vols., vol. i, pp. 7, 8.

† Pinkerton, *Scottish Tragic Ballads*, London, 1781, pp. 106, 107.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

As a collection this work is nearly negligible; yet the version of *Sir James the Rose* was accepted by Child.

More valuable than the texts are the dissertations, one *On the Oral Tradition of Poetry*, another *On the Tragic Ballad*. In the first dissertation he draws material from Blackwell and Macpherson to illustrate the course of tradition from the earliest times to its gradual disappearance on the advance of literature. Thereupon he proceeds to a discussion of the arts by which the bards sought to aid the memory. Besides musical cadence, he mentions repetition, alliteration, rhyme, and refrain. On the refrain, or "burden," he remarks: "That this is very ancient among the barbaric nations, may be gathered from the known song of Regner Lodbrog, to be found in Olaus Wormius; every stanza of which begins with one and the same line." Thus Pinkerton notes what Percy omitted to note. Alliteration, too, he says, was a regular "Runic" device. The ballad stanza, he continues, was the first form of rhymed verse, lending itself easily to the composition and the retention of poetry. The internal rhyme, frequently used in the ballads, he regards as particularly suitable for the depiction of violent passion. When all these circumstances are considered, he concludes, it is not difficult to understand how "the most noble productions of former periods have been preserved in the memory of a succession of admirers, and have had the good fortune to arrive at our times pure and uncorrupted."* In spite of the manifest absurdity of the last words, the dissertation is worth notice as the first connected discussion of ballad technique, and as a definite attempt to explain the tenacity of tradition by the operation of such external means.

* Pinkerton, *Scottish Tragic Ballads*, pp. ix-xxvii.

The second dissertation considers the tragic ballad in particular. The ballad, he says, is peculiar to a barbarous period. "In an advanced state of arts, the Comic Ballad assumes the form of the Song or Sonnet, and the Tragic or Heroic Ballad that of the higher Ode." With characteristic positiveness comes the assertion that "perhaps the Tragic Ballad yields to no effort of human genius" in giving the pleasure that arises from the contemplation of the mournful. After describing the ballad poetry of the Northern nations, of the Spanish, and of the English, he sums up that of the Scots as "perhaps, like the face of their country, more various than the rest. We find in it the bravery of the English, the gallantry of the Spanish, and I am afraid in some instances the ferocity of the Northern." He praises "some passages in *Hardyknute*" to the skies; they "yield to no attempt of a strong and dark fancy." In the portrayal of the pathetic "the Scottish Ballads yield to no compositions whatever." With reference to *Child Maurice*, Pinkerton outdoes Gray by insisting that the classic rules "are better illustrated by this rude effort of the Gothic Muse, than by the most exquisite Tragedy of ancient or modern times." This is an example of the lack of balance which marks most of Pinkerton's pronouncements. Similarly he lays the ballads to minstrel authorship without discrimination.*

The Monthly Review took hold of the production rather roughly in the number for April, 1782. The writer, after discussing Pinkerton's denial of Lady Wardlaw's connection with the first edition of *Hardyknute*, says: "But even though the antiquity of the former Part rested upon the most

* Pinkerton, *Scottish Tragic Ballads*, pp. xxviii-xxxvii.

unmovable basis, we should have many doubts respecting the authenticity of this, which, though not without merit, is evidently the production of a very inferior hand." He questions some of the other pieces as well.* *The Critical Review* for September, 1781, on the other hand, singles out *The Death of Menteith* as the best of the "new ballads," and applauds the "judicious amendment" of *Lady Bothwell's Lament*.†

In the face of gathering suspicion Pinkerton writes to Dalrymple, June 10, 1783, admitting the general correctness of Dalrymple's previously communicated misgivings with regard to the authenticity of *I wish I were where Helen lies*, but stoutly rejecting a similar charge with regard to the additions to *Hardyknute*. Dalrymple had found, among other incriminating things, in certain parts of the poem marked ignorance of mediaeval castles. To this Pinkerton replies: "I have studied the feudal manners and those of chivalry as much as any man in Europe, and can perceive no anachronism in the poem."‡

The second edition, under the name of *Select Scottish Ballads*, appeared in 1783, containing some new material in the shape of several tragic ballads, four "romanzes" rendered from the Spanish, and a volume of "ballads of the comic kind." The dissertations in the first volume remain as before, and there is no sign of recanting in the case of *Hardyknute*.

The second volume begins with a *Dissertation on the Comic Ballad*; it is of no critical importance, exhibiting a lax-

* *The Monthly Review*, vol. lxvi, pp. 292-294.

† *The Critical Review*, vol. lii, pp. 205-208.

‡ Pinkerton, *Literary Correspondence*, vol. i, pp. 36-39.

ity of definition which the miscellaneous character of the selected pieces only accentuates. The "Comic Ballads fall under the several denominations of Pastoral, Amatory, Ludicrous, and Convivial; this Dissertation therefore naturally divides itself into these several heads." The pastoral eclogue, such as Pope's, he criticizes as "quite foreign to modern manners;" the pastoral song, such as *Robene and Makyne* among his pieces, "is infinitely more consonant to modern manners, as it implies no personal representation. It is not supposed to be written or spoken by a shepherd, but merely to convey rural sentiments and images." Of the next class he asserts that, excepting Sappho, "there is no writer who has painted love in more genuine and tender colours than are used in the Scotch Amatory Ballads." Presently, after quoting from Beattie's *Essays* several passages referring to the origin of a number of Scottish songs in the region bordering on the Tweed, Pinkerton launches an indignant reproach against Ramsay and his collaborators for not having "rather used their endeavours to recover and preserve the real ancient ballads, than to compose new ones." Thereupon, in agreement with the opinion of a "very celebrated and intelligent physician," he attributes a number of ballads and tunes to shepherd composition. "I believe not above half a dozen of these genuine Scottish pastoral ballads are in print; and suspect all such may be found in this volume." Among them he names *The Yellow-hair'd Laddie* and *Ewbuchts Marion*. Here is the point where the earlier rather indefinite association of pastoral with ballad comes to a definite and highly interesting conclusion. The remarks on the ludicrous and convivial ballads require no particular discussion. In conclusion the editor says that

the work is to be looked upon as a "selection" including "only the very best." The first volume, indeed, contains a "complete digest of such tragic pieces . . . as any ways deserve preservation; those omitted being of no merit of any kind;" among these he mentions *Johnie Armstrong* and *Young Waters*.*

The collection consists of a miscellaneous assortment of texts, the second volume being of somewhat greater value than the first.

The Critical Review for August, 1783, was in general commendatory. The reviewer takes issue, however, with the attribution of ballads to shepherd authorship as unreasonable; but he concludes by openly praising the "superior correctness with which the songs are published by this editor."† *The Monthly Review* for September, 1784, speaks appreciatively of ballads in general, but holds that many in the collection "might peaceably have slept in oblivion, without injury to the reputation of the Scottish muse," among them the "modern antiques."‡

The real criticism was yet to come. In *The Gentleman's Magazine* for November, 1784, Ritson denounced Pinkerton in the strongest terms as a forger worthy to be ranked with other Scottish impostors like Lauder and Macpherson. To give point to his acrimonious attack he made use of the pen-name "Anti-Scot," a conspicuous instance of the national differences which we have seen thrown into ballad criticism under various forms in earlier periods. Ritson, branding the first part of *Hardyknute* as "certainly spu-

* Pinkerton, *Select Scottish Ballads*, London, 1783, 2 vols., vol. ii, pp. ix-xli.

† *The Critical Review*, vol. lvi, pp. 129 ff.

‡ *The Monthly Review*, vol. lxxi, pp. 226, 227.

rious," charges Pinkerton with the invention of the second part, and of *The Laird of Woodhouselie, Lord Livingston, Binnorie, The Death of Menteith*, and most of *I wish I were where Helen lies*. The pieces taken from Percy he passes over with the slur, "I want to prove *your* forgery, not *his*."* Ritson's strictures, though perfectly justifiable, were so snarling in tone as to call forth a sort of apology from the editor for the "insertion of so singular a literary curiosity, and complete specimen of modern criticism."

In 1785, Pinkerton sent out his eccentric *Letters of Literature* under the pen-name of Robert Heron, not to be confused with a miscellaneous writer of the same name. One of the letters deals with the question of literary forgery. In it the author asserts that "those innocents who call such forgery criminal forget that they are blaspheming their saviour and their religion;" for Jesus represented his parables to contain the truth. As for the merits of the alleged forger, "perhaps in fact nothing can be more heroic and generous in literary affairs than a writer's ascribing to antiquity his own production; and thus sacrificing his own fame to give higher satisfaction to the public." In matters relating to history or other fact misrepresentation is improper; but "poetry and romance are sacred to fiction, and it can never be pushed too far."† In this way Pinkerton prepared the ground for his later confessions.

Meanwhile, Ritson had published *A Select Collection of*

* *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. liv, Part II, pp. 812-814. The year before, Ritson had taken a fling at Percy in the *Remarks . . . on . . . the Last Edition of Shakespeare*, London, 1783, p. 201; and at Johnson for confusing Adam Bell with Robin Hood's men, pp. 29, 30.

† Robert Heron (J. Pinkerton), *Letters of Literature*, London, 1785, pp. 383-385.

English Songs (1783). Reference has already been made to the reflections on Percy which the outraged editor scattered here and there in his introductory material. In the preface Ritson clearly enunciates the distinction between the lyric song and the narrative ballad which Shenstone and Bruce had expressed privately, but which no editor before this had so unmistakably propounded or so strikingly exemplified in practice. With regard to the ballads, he emphasizes the care with which the texts have been reproduced from ancient copies, but declines to fix their date except in general between the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth and the time of Charles I; here he puts his own procedure against Percy's.*

The *Historical Essay on the Origin and Progress of National Song* gives a detailed survey of song in ancient and modern times, presenting a good deal of new and valuable material. Much of his separate discussion of the ballads has been touched upon in connection with his castigation of Percy; but a few points may be added here. He traces the progress of song from ancient to modern times, in Greece, Rome, Provence, Spain, Britain, and other lands. The remarks on Scandinavian verse are brief, but correct enough. "The Scalds (polishers) or poets of Iceland, the university of the North," he says, "are as famous for their skill in poetry and song as the Celtic bards." Not only the scalds, but persons of high rank cultivated the art, which is "even supposed to have been introduced by Odin." By way of illustration, he gives a short account of the songs of *Regner Lodbrog* and *Harold the Valiant*, with a reference to Percy's *Five Pieces*. "Examples of this nature are numer-

* Ritson, *English Songs*, London, 1783, 3 vols., vol. i, pp. ii-xi.

ous," he concludes. "Many of the ancient Scaldic songs are said to be yet chanted by the peasantry of Denmark and Sweden."* It is quite possible that here he had the ballads in mind.

It is of interest to note that Ritson, although not prejudiced noticeably in favor of popular poetry, speaks of *The Battle of Otterburn* and the older version of *Chevy Chase* as "the most curious and remarkable pieces" from the reign of Henry VI. These two ballads, he grants, may possibly be of minstrel origin. Later he takes the manifestly erroneous position that the English ballad, with the two exceptions noted, took its rise in the reign of Elizabeth. His misconception in this regard must be laid in great part to a failure to allow for changes in language through the operation of tradition. Of the black-letter copies he says very definitely that only three are as old as the sixteenth century, but that the composition of many may be of as remote a date as that fixed for those previously discussed.† The essay, in spite of its somewhat pretentious range, was a real contribution to the subject.

The selection of songs covers a generous field, comprising such things as Shenstone's *Pastoral Ballad* and Tickell's *Colin and Lucy*; the inclusion of Percy's *O Nancy, wilt thou go with me* is noteworthy in view of Ritson's animosity toward the author. The classification according to subject-matter is not particularly illuminating. The ballads are arranged on a similar plan, the choice being rather broadly inclusive. Some of the numbers had appeared in the *Reliques* and in the first *Old Ballads*, which did not deter

* Ritson, *English Songs*, London, 1783, 3 vols., vol. i, pp. xl-xlii.

† *Ibid.*, pp. l-lix.

Ritson from giving his better copies. The way in which the whole is ordered illustrates the clearness of the editor's ideas as to the difference between ballad and song. The third volume offers a good collection of popular tunes.

The Monthly Review for September, 1785, referred to the collection as "preferable to any which has appeared."* *The Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1784, called it "a classical repository of English song," and praised the editor's erudition and fidelity most warmly.† A communication in the November issue, however, censured Ritson's "insolence" toward Percy and Warton, and charged him with having taken from Warton without acknowledgment the theory of the Scandinavian mediation of Oriental coloring, and of the dispossession among the Saxons of barbaric poetry through the advance of Christianity.‡ The year before, H. Lemoine, writing in the same periodical, had praised the northern ballads in very high terms, and ascribed their exalted ideals of chivalry to Scandinavian origin. "The Norwegians," he says, "who inhabited part of the ancient Scandinavia, made frequent descents on the coast of Scotland, and were for a series of years Sovereigns of the Hebrides, where they introduced the martial genius and Gothic manners of their country." In the ballads, as portraits of "the manners of our ancestors," he discovers "a singular contrast of religion and gallantry, magnificence and simplicity, bravery and cowardice."§

Caw's *Poetical Museum* (1784), "containing Songs and

* *The Monthly Review*, vol. lxxiii, p. 234.

† *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. liv, Part I, p. 451.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. liv, Part II, pp. 817, 818.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. liii, Part II, pp. 839-841. See also vol. liv, Part II, p. 660.

Poems on almost every subject, mostly from periodical publications," brought new versions of *Dick o' the Cow*, *Jock o' the Side*, and *Hobie Noble*, which afterward found a place in Child's collection. The editor apologizes for the rudeness of the first two, but thinks they will be acceptable for their illustration of ancient manners. The last two he designates as songs, apparently with no thought of distinctiveness in the term.* In his comments on the second part of *Hardyknute* he gives credit to the "judicious Compiler of the Scottish Tragic Ballads, who hath had the honour of snatching this valuable remains from the jaws of oblivion."† The few notes in the miscellany are of small consequence.

The "judicious compiler," Pinkerton, finally confessed his benevolent duplicity in an edition of *Ancient Scottish Poems* (1786). Among the Scottish poets, of whom he gives a chronological survey, he discusses Sir John Bruce, to whom he credits the original fragment of *Hardyknute*. Thereupon he admits having written the second part as early as 1776, not for profit, but to "give pleasure to the public." Further, he pleads guilty to the composition of the greater part of *The Laird of Woodhouseslie* and *Lord Livingston*; "yet of both he had small lines from tradition." *Binnorie* was "one half from tradition, one half by the editor; tho he could not now himself distinguish the lines." *The Death of Menteith* was "wholly by the editor;" *Lord Airth's Complaint*, "from a manuscript." *I wish I were where Helen lies* was all his but the first three lines. Two of the fragments in the first volume and no less than nine pieces in the second round out the list. In justification of his practices

* George Caw, *The Poetical Museum*, Hawick, 1784, pp. 22, 145, 193.

† *Ibid.*, p. 315.

he explains that he never spoke of a manuscript that was not actually before him; the fiction rested merely on "*supposititious tradition*." * Though Pinkerton thus laid bare his faults, he went far to redeem himself in this new publication.

The poems are introduced by an elaborate *Essay on the Origin of Scottish Poetry*. The historical disquisition on the origin of the Britons, Picts, and Scots comes to have a certain bearing on ballad inquiry. Of the British, Irish, and Pictish (or north Scandinavian) influences which combined to shape Scottish poetry, the last had the greatest importance. "Pictish poetry furnished the language and therein the chief fund of Scottish poetry. From the stormy heaths of Scandinavia seem also to have been transplanted several of these wild flowers which adorn the compositions of the old Scottish minstrels." The "wild horror" in much of the Scottish verse he mentions particularly as of Pictish origin. Of the Scandinavian poems, "from the time of Saxo Grammaticus . . . down to the present day," he makes the wild statement that none "exceed the length of short tales, etc., or what we would call ballads." From this he argues positively that "no Pictish bard ever thought of exceeding the bounds of a song or a ballad. Perhaps some of these compositions may yet be retained by tradition in Buchan . . . where the Pictish language remains almost pure. Indeed I suspect that no Scottish poet, before Thomas of Ercildon, ventured beyond a ballad when using his native tongue." He distinguishes between minstrels and bards, and leans toward Ritson's opinions in the assertion that "the poor

* Pinkerton, *Ancient Scottish Poems*, London, 1786, 2 vols., vol. i, pp. cxxvi-cxxxi.

bards, who entertained the mob, might recite ballads and short romances in the vulgar tongue; but the minstrels . . . would use French only as in England.”* These extracts may show sufficiently that the essay is more distinguished for daring assertions than for proved truth. Some idea of the inclusiveness of his terms may be had from his calling *Christ's Kirk on the Green* a ballad.†

The vagaries of the essay do not affect the merits of the texts; so far as they are concerned, he took warning from his earlier misadventures. In the appendix to the second volume a detailed account is given of the two Maitland manuscripts and of the Bannatyne manuscript. The Maitland manuscripts, his chief sources, were called to his attention by Percy.

The Gentleman's Magazine for February, 1786, though it marked the editor as a man of “genius, eccentricity, learning, impiety, and fastidiousness,” praised the work liberally.‡ *The Monthly Review* for February, 1787, found in the essay “a considerable degree of historical knowledge, mixed with affectation, and disgraced by infidelity;” but as a whole the review was favorable.§ Both periodicals emphasized the value of the texts.

Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* (1787-1803) has no critical material; yet as a repository of songs, ballads, and tunes, it requires a brief mention. The songs are in the place of honor, but there are also many ballads; a good

* Pinkerton, *Ancient Scottish Poems*, London, 1786, 2 vols., vol. i, pp. lii-lxvi.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 450.

‡ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lvi, Part I, pp. 147-150.

§ *The Monthly Review*, vol. lxxvi, pp. 121-129.

number of the pieces are presented in fragmentary form, owing to the exigencies of space. Burns contributed a great part of the contents in the shape of original poems, and of songs and ballads gathered from various sources. Among the numbers supplied by him are *Ae fond kiss, and then we sever* and *O my Luve's like a red, red rose*. Of the ballads he brought to the collection, *The Rantin Laddie* and *Geordie* may be mentioned.*

Pinkerton's *Scotish Poems* (1792) demands only a cursory recognition; neither its contents nor the critical remarks concern ballad discussion. Among the pieces printed are *Squire Meldrum*, *Eight Interludes* by Lindsay, *Gawan and Gologras*, *The Houlat*, and several art ballads from the beginning of the sixteenth century. In his *Preliminaries* the editor announces that this is his last effort for the recovery of ancient Scottish poetry.† The end was surely much better than the beginning.

Ritson produced another valuable work in his *Ancient Songs* (1790), "from the time of King Henry III to the Revolution." It contains both songs and ballads, described by the editor at the outset as "a small but genuine collection." This emphasis recalls the editor's criticism of Percy, which occupies considerable space in the discussion of the minstrels, and to which reference has been made above. Here some particulars may be added to supplement our view of the writer's opinions. Most of the pertinent material must be drawn from the *Observations on the Ancient English Minstrels*.

As already pointed out, Ritson flatly contradicts the the-

* James Johnson, *The Scots Musical Museum*, Edinburgh, n.d., 6 vols.

† Pinkerton, *Scotish Poems*, London, 1792, 3 vols., vol. i, p. xiii.

ory advanced by Percy that the minstrels "united the arts of poetry and music." He does not deny, however, that "there were individuals formerly, who made it their business to wander up and down the country chanting romances, and singing songs and ballads to the harp, fiddle, or other more humble and less artificial instrument." These men, though they were probably "comprehended within the general term of Minstrels," were not of the order that Percy had in mind. "The art of printing was fatal to the Minstrels who sung . . . their compositions would not bear reading; of course not above one or two of them ever got to the press: the songs used by the ballad-singers, on the contrary, were smooth and regular," and were all printed. With equally daring positiveness he designates an exclusive number of eight ballads which, "according to the rules laid down by Dr. Percy, may be supposed to have been originally written for and sung to the harp." The list comprises the older version of *Chevy Chase*, *The Battle of Otterburn*, *Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard*, *Lord Thomas and Fair Eleanor*, *Fair Margaret and Sweet William*, *John Dory*, *John Armstrong*, and *Captain Care*. These he compares, with some reservation on the score of popular taste, to such ballads as *Rosamund*, *Jane Shore*, and *The Babes in the Wood*. "These stanzas," he says of the excerpts from the pieces last named, "exclusive of their superior smoothness, may defy all the Minstrel songs extant, nay even those in the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, for simplicity, nature, interest, and pathos, to which it must be confessed these celebrated rhapsodies have very small pretensions."*

In the *Dissertation on the Songs, Music, and Vocal and In-*

* Ritson, *Ancient Songs*, London, 1790 (1792), pp. i-xxvi.

strumental Performance of the Ancient English he touches upon ballad matters in various connections, and gives some hitherto unnoticed literary references. He also makes some admissions which tend to invalidate his earlier definite ballad chronology. Thus he remarks that "the number of ancient printed songs and ballads which have perished must be considerable." Further, "Our most ancient popular ballads, if we may judge from the few specimens preserved, were singularly rude, and not above two or three of these were known to have been printed for the people. It is barely possible that something of the kind may be still preserved in the country by tradition." * The allowance of this bare possibility, as well as the admission of the probable loss of a considerable number of printed texts, would seem to shake in no small degree Ritson's earlier theory of the Elizabethan origin of the English ballad. With his zeal for the discomfiture of Percy, and his somewhat pedantic adherence to the letter, he failed to sound the possible depths of tradition. Pinkerton, at the other pole, in his labyrinthine wanderings among the Britons, Picts, and prehistoric Scots, saw to better purpose, though darkly, the antiquity of the ballad form. Yet it must be granted that Ritson erred on the safer side.

In this collection the editor shows a greater laxity in classification and terminology than in his *English Songs*. In that work the ballads are more exclusively popular; in this, he gives the designation, for instance, to such a poem as the *Requiem to the Conspirators against Henry IV*. Among the popular materials are versions of *The Baffled Knight*, under the title *The Over Courteous Knight*, and of *Robyn and Gan-*

* Ritson, *Ancient Songs*, pp. xxvii-lxxvi; the last two citations, pp. lxxii-lxxvi.

delyn. In *The Jovial Tinker*, Ritson tried his hand at combination on the plan of *The Friar of Orders Gray*.

The Critical Review for November, 1792, gave the work a gracious reception, and agreed with Ritson in the criticism of Percy's theory of the poet-musician, but challenged Ritson's ascription of this character to the French minstrels.* *The Monthly Review* for February, 1793, praised the editor's veracity and industry at the expense of his judgment and erudition, and held the debate on the minstrels to be largely a war of words, but in this and in the matter of alterations leaned distinctly to Percy's side.†

In his next publication, the *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry* (1791), Ritson contented himself with a short preface and a few brief notes, which require no particular discussion. In the preface he credits the pieces to minstrel authors, and pays his respects to Percy in surprisingly delicate language. The ballad *History of Tom Thumb* he holds to have been "modernised by some ballad-writer of Queen Elizabeth's time; very probably the same Richard Johnson who afterward turned it into prose."‡ The other ballads included are *Adam Bell* and *The King and the Barker*.

The Critical Review for January, 1792, excepted *Adam Bell* from the general condemnation that "there is not one piece in this collection which a man of taste or sense would not be ashamed to publish, or even to say that he had read.§

The Monthly Review for May, 1793, belittled the editor's zeal for the true reading; such minuteness is proper

* *The Critical Review*, new series, vol. vi, pp. 283-293.

† *The Monthly Review*, new series, vol. x, pp. 178-182.

‡ Ritson, *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry*, London, 1791, preface.

§ *The Critical Review*, new series, vol. iv, pp. 55-58.

in the case of Shakespeare, "but, in a two-penny ballad, with no Rowley for its author, the chance will always be, that Dr. Percy's reading is preferable to the *true one*, and should therefore remain undisturbed."* *The Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1791, was most lavish in its commendation.†

Ritson no doubt felt, in publishing his *Scottish Songs* (1794), that the Scottish editors needed reliable assistance in bringing their poetry before the public. At all events, he gives considerable space, in his *Historical Essay on Scottish Song*, to a fresh ventilation of Pinkerton's "palpable and bungling forgery" of *Hardyknute*, and of his other productions in the same *genre*. He also criticizes Ramsay justly for taking liberties with his texts, and for preferring his own emendations and those of his collaborators to "ancient and original words . . . which are now irretrievable." Of Herd's second edition he speaks with proper appreciation. To fill up the measure for his predecessors he adds a drop of disapproval of Percy's inserting into *Gil Morrice* lines that he knew to be modern.‡

The critical observations otherwise are not of any singular importance. He names a number of traditional ballads, but finds in most of them certain modern turns of expression that make a determination of the true chronology difficult. In this connection he makes the admission, which he might have made more clearly in his earlier works, that successive changes in phraseology obscure the original form. It is of interest to find him arriving at the conclusion that "tradi-

* *The Monthly Review*, new series, vol. xi, pp. 72-77.

† *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxi, Part I, p. 561.

‡ Ritson, *Scottish Songs*, London, 1794, 2 vols., vol. i, pp. lxi-lxxvii.

tion, in short, is a species of alchemy which converts gold to lead." As to authorship, he comes to essential agreement with Pinkerton, that "the genuine and peculiar natural song of Scotland, is to be sought . . . in the productions of obscure or anonymous authors, of shepherds and milkmaids, who actually felt the sensations they describe." To the same source he attributes much of the national music.*

Of the four classes in which the materials are arranged, the first two, the "love songs" and the "comic songs," are outside of our discussion. In the third class, the "historical, political, and martial songs," he admits *Sir Patrick Spence*, *Johnie Armstrong*, *The Bonny Earl of Murray*, and some others more properly to be described as ballads. The lyric quality of *The Bonny Earl of Murray*, to be sure, might make it an exception; but there seems to be no valid reason for excluding the other pieces named from the fourth class, consisting of "romantic and legendary songs, or what are usually and properly denominated ballads." Here he includes, for example, *The Wee Wee Man*, *The Cruel Knight*, and *Willy and Annet*, which he had classed in the *Essay* with the distinctive traditional ballads. All in all, however, the work shows sobriety and good judgment.

In *The Northumberland Garland* (1793) and *Robin Hood* (1795), Ritson made his last notable contributions to English balladry. The first need be mentioned merely for the inclusion, among its miscellaneous contents, of the good older versions of *The Battle of Otterburn* and *The Hunting of the Cheviat*; † the second is surely one of the most remarkable of the editor's performances.

* Ritson, *Scottish Songs*, London, 1794, 2 vols., vol. i, pp. lxxix-xc.

† Ritson, *Northern Garlands*, London, 1810.

Particularly interesting in *Robin Hood* is Ritson's critical treatment of the legendary material which had accumulated about the figure of the outlaw and his men. The concise *Life of Robin Hood*, and the stupendous array of "notes and illustrations" which accompanied it, show the antiquary at his best and the critic at something less than his best. In fairness it should be noted, at the outset, that in his preface the writer declines responsibility for the authenticity of possibly questionable details, which have been included in the effort to give an exhaustive survey. Granting this, however, the work has still the effect of an uncritical, though otherwise valuable, compilation. According to *The Life of Robin Hood*, the outlaw was born about 1160, and was commonly reputed to have been Earl of Huntingdon, "a title to which, in the latter part of his life, at least, he actually appears to have had some sort of pretension."* Maid Marian, however, the editor regards with suspicion; "who or whatever this lady was," she is not mentioned in the *Lytell Geste of Robin Hood*, "or in any other poem or song concerning him, except a comparatively modern one of no merit."† The epitaph, on the other hand, he accepts as probably genuine; Percy had referred to it as suspicious, against which Ritson holds that there is no ground for believing that it was never on Robin Hood's tomb.‡ These few instances must serve to give some idea of Ritson's point of view and his relation to the historical and literary evidence upon which he drew for his information.

Entirely aside from his use of the abundant materials, the mere collection of them was of great importance in

* Ritson, *Robin Hood*, London, 1795, 2 vols., vol. i, p. iv.

† *Ibid.*, *Notes*, p. xxxi.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Notes*, pp. xlvii, xlviii.

throwing light on the subject. Besides a great number of other references from earlier and later sources, he draws up a serviceable account of Robin Hood in the drama, from the mediaeval plays down to the comic opera of his own time.* Some of the evidence collected, it may be added, further overthrows his previous view of the Elizabethan origin of the English ballad. Thus he admits, on the testimony of writers quoted, "that poems and stories on the subject of our hero and his companions were extraordinarily common before and during the sixteenth century."† If this seems to be a begging of the question, or a dubitable concession, he allows outright "that some of these identical pieces, or others of the like nature, were great favourites with the common people in the time of Queen Elizabeth, though not much esteemed."‡ In fact, the whole work was a virtual allowance of an older date.

The ballads printed, from the very inclusiveness of the collection, are of varying worth. Most of the pieces in the second volume, the editor explains, were common broad-sheet ballads; but many of the numbers were derived from better sources, and as a repository the collection was a most useful addition to the previous stores of popular poetry.

At this point we must take our leave of Ritson the editor. As a mediator of pure texts, and as a castigator of editorial morals, he is the eminent figure of the century. Though he was by no means the first to reverence his sources, yet more consistently than any one before him he followed this principle in the treatment of a form of poetry which hitherto had not been held to deserve such consideration; by per-

* Ritson, *Robin Hood, Notes*, pp. l-xxiii.

† *Ibid.*, p. lxxvii. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. lxxxii-lxxxiv.

sisting in this course he exerted a powerful influence toward the ideals which obtain now almost as a matter of general consent. His painstaking research enriched the illustrative material very considerably. So far as theory is concerned, he does not stand out prominently; he realized that he was not born to that sphere, and usually kept his feet on the ground. As between Percy and Ritson, the suffrage must fall to Ritson. The two represented tendencies in the eighteenth century which sometimes were united, and at other times ran apart from one another. The "elegant" Bishop Percy and the "curious" Mr. Ritson naturally could not bed together. "Curiosity" seems to us the better endowment for a ballad editor; as to the rest, each may wear his own laurels in the other's despite.

For a capable judgment on the merits of the particular dispute between Ritson and Percy as to the character of the minstrels, we may refer to George Ellis. The first edition of his excellent *Specimens of the Early English Poets* (1790) has only a brief preface. The second edition (1801), improved and enlarged, contains a scholarly *Historical Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the English Poetry and Language*, in which there is a definite utterance on the subject in question. He holds that under the Norman kings the court minstrel and the minstrel in the noble household was "expected to unite with the talent of versifying, those of music and recitation. . . . But as it is very difficult for the same person to attain equal excellence in all the sister arts, the profession of the poet, the harper, and the reciter were afterwards undertaken by several associates, all of whom, on account of the privileges attached to the official minstrels, thought fit to assume the same honourable but equivocal

title. . . . That our English minstrels at any time united all the talents of the profession, and were at once poets, and reciters, and musicians, is extremely doubtful; but that they excited and directed the efforts of their contemporary poets to a particular species of composition, is as evident, as that a body of actors must influence the exertions of theatrical writers."*

With this judicious summary of the evidence the case can be dismissed. It may be added, however, that Ellis does not interpret the dearth of names in his poetical catalogue, toward the middle of the fifteenth century, as a proof that poetry at this time was little cultivated. "The contrary, indeed, is most probably true; because many of the old ballads preserved in Percy's *Reliques*, several of the metrical romances . . . and the greater part of the fabulous stories of Robin Hood . . . appear to belong to this period."† In leaving Ellis, we should note his classification of the sources of romance under the four heads of Arthur, Charlemagne, Troy, and Alexander.‡

Another work of the same year, which discusses both ballad and romance, is Leyden's edition of *The Complaynt of Scotland*. Against the theory of the Gothic (Scandinavian) origin of romance, as propounded by Mallet, Percy, and Pinkerton, and the theory of Arabic origins, as upheld by Warburton and Warton, he inclines to the view that finds the seat of romance in Armorica; in this particular he shows a one-sidedness foreign to Ellis's broader outlook.

* George Ellis, *Specimens of the Early English Poets*, second edition, London, 1801, 3 vols., vol. i, pp. 127-131; the "particular species of composition" he had in mind was probably the ballad.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 346, 347.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 134 ff.

The Irish or Gaelic historical poems he regards as "episodes, or rhapsodies, detached from larger poems, of which they seem to have formed a part." Such poems he believes Macpherson to have combined, "though certainly without due attention to the fidelity incumbent on an editor." Others might likewise be drawn together, on a plan such as that of Ritson's *Robin Hood*. Many of the "wild romantic ballads, which are still common in the Lowlands of Scotland," are similarly episodic in character, suggesting a derivation from longer romances. He mentions especially "the popular songs which relate to dragons and monsters" as bearing on their face the evidence of their origin in "the tales of Chivalry." Another class of popular songs, "which describe the unnatural involvements of the passion of Love, may, with propriety, be referred to the ancient romances." Among these he names *Lizie Wan* and *The Bonny Hind*. "Of the genius of the Scottish minstrels it is difficult to form an accurate opinion, as so few compositions, which can be certainly referred to them, are extant."* Besides these sensible observations of a general nature, Leyden gives more particular consideration to the list of romances, ballads, and dances in the text of the *Complaynt*,† with which his thoughtful *Preliminary Dissertation* is largely occupied. Here he points out, for instance, what is highly probable, that the ballad of *The Percy and Montgomery*, in the repertory of the shepherds, "was probably a Scottish copy of the *Battle of Otterburn*, not exactly the same with the edition extant."‡ The edition as a whole was a note-

* *The Complaynt of Scotland*, ed. John Leyden, Edinburgh, 1801, *Preliminary Dissertation*, pp. 251-273.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 98-103. ‡ *Ibid.*, *Preliminary Dissertation*, p. 276.

worthy contribution to Scottish ballad criticism, which was soon to be so signally enriched by Leyden's friend Scott. Shortly after the publication of Scott's *Minstrelsy*, Robert Nares wrote to Percy, April, 1803, mentioning Leyden, Scott, and Ellis, and giving Percy the credit for the "spirit of research into our early poetry, which . . . almost daily produces some accession to that branch of literature."*

Some reference has already been made to the correspondence between Percy and Scott, and between Percy and Jamieson, relative to the intended ballad publications of the two younger men. In addition to this there was a good deal of epistolary and periodical criticism on the part of the editors who have been reviewed, and of others who had more or less interest in the subject. A particular survey of the greater portion of this material cannot be attempted; most of it is relatively unimportant, however much in its bulk it illustrates the increasing attention which was being given to ballad inquiry. Certain of the more prominent things in the occasional criticism of the period should have a brief rehearsal.

In Malone's edition of Shakespeare (1790), the ballads are left out of consideration in determining the sources of *The Merchant of Venice*, *King Lear*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. The editor, however, prints the *King Lear* ballad at the close of the play. In *Romeo and Juliet* he gives Adam Bell his just place by reading "Adam Cupid" for "Abraham Cupid," and, in harmony with Percy's suggestion as to the ballad reference, allows him to shoot "so trim" instead of "so true."† Otherwise the edition takes note of the ballad

* Nichols's *Illustrations*, vol. vii, p. 602.

† Shakespeare, *Plays and Poems*, ed. Malone, London, 1790, 10 vols., vol. ix, pp. 54, 55.

passages touched upon by earlier commentators. The folio edition by Steevens (1791) has no notes.

Aside from this matter, the incidental criticism of these years which has come in my way, except for that connected with the literary use of the ballad, is not English but Scottish. It may be noticed in chronological order.

First to be considered are some contributions to the Edinburgh *Bee*. A writer in the number for April 13, 1791, J. Runcole by name, starts out with the thesis that the list in *The Complaynt of Scotland* argues against the antiquity of "the present songs." He notes further that "neither in the Bannatyne nor Maitland collection, do we find any of the pastoral songs that are reckoned ancient." The character of the love songs in the Bannatyne Collection indicates that they were written by "courtiers and scholars, rather than simple swains." Though the antiquity of "the songs and ballads that were the delight of the common people . . . cannot be proved from old Mss., they may have existed at a still earlier period, among an idle illiterate people." They are not to be ascribed to the Border minstrels; but in the vales of the Tweed "one or more original geniuses might arise together or in succession, who were destined to give a new turn to the taste of their countrymen." Like some earlier theorists, he suggests shepherd authors for the ballads. He comes to the conclusion that the vicissitudes of tradition have brought about "capital changes" in form; "hence so few of the pieces admired in Queen Mary's time can now be discovered in modern collections."*

Another contributor to the same periodical, for July 20, 1791, argues, in an essay *On Pastoral Poetry*, against those

* *The Bee*, ed. James Anderson, Edinburgh, 1790, etc., vol. ii, pp. 201-210.

who regard the surviving ballads as sham antiques, explains the modern terms in some of them as having arisen by natural mutation, and thinks no proof has been presented against the antiquity of "those simple and natural compositions, of the pastoral sort, that are still preserved in the Scotch dialect." * While these two testimonies are not altogether original, they still emphasize sensibly the natural influence of tradition, upon which the editors might have spoken more clearly.

The real Robert Heron, whose name Pinkerton used — whether by design or not — for his *Letters of Literature*, made a journey through the western counties of Scotland in 1792; the next year he gave to the public some *Observations* on his tour. Among the miscellaneous annotations on scenery, antiquities, manufactures, commerce, and so forth, there are some things that concern us more nearly. Recalling his passage across the Firth to Kinross, he mentions an old law of James III, commanding "that there be na schip frauched out of the realm, with any staple gudes, fra the feast of Simon's day and Jude, unto the feast of the purification of our Lady, called Candelmass." Upon this he observes that Sir Patrick Spence must have been sent out before the first day fixed in the law. This point is of no consequence; but in the same connection he prints the *A* version of the ballad, and gives an analysis of its technique and style sufficiently unusual to bear quotation. "There is a beauty," he says, "in the manner in which Sir Patrick Spence is represented as passing hastily from his reflections on the probable danger to which he was judiciously or maliciously exposed, to give orders for the necessary preparations for the voyage;

* *The Bee*, vol. iv, pp. 57-65.

in the image introduced by the sailor who wishes to divert him from his purpose; in the abrupt transition to the fatal consequences of this ill-timed voyage; and in the images by which the distress of its miscarriage is marked."* This specific criticism departs measurably from the common observations on simplicity, pathos, and the like; in fact, few since Gray had discussed an individual ballad with so true an appreciation. In commenting on Lochroyan Bay he refers to *The Lass of the Lochroyans* as "one of the finest of our old love-ballads," notes its likeness to *Lord Thomas and Fair Annet*, and holds both "to be only variations of the same song."† He refers to other ballads and to *Ossian* as connected with other places.

The same writer compiled *A New General History of Scotland* (1794-99), which contains something to the purpose. In this work he expresses the opinion that, though the traditional fragments of Celtic poetry are "too barren of circumstances" to permit an accurate dating of the events they deal with, the deeds of the heroes of *Ossian* should probably be referred to the third century.‡ After some reference to the Scandinavians among the northern Caledonians, he insists that the Gaelic fragments, of all kinds, do not belong solely to the Scots, but to all the elements of population in the north of Scotland.§ "Both facts and style have undoubtedly been altered, corrupted, from time to timemodernized; just like our English legendary and heroic ballads,

* Robert Heron, *Observations made in a Journey through the Western Counties of Scotland*, Perth, 1793, 2 vols., vol. i, pp. 22-25.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 299.

‡ Robert Heron, *A New General History of Scotland*, Perth, 1794-99, 5 vols., vol. i, pp. 13-15.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 93.

of some of which we have three or four different sets, composed after so many successive intervals." The old songs in the Anglo-Saxon dialect of the Lowlands "must either be all attributed, at random, to one, two, or three distinguished minstrels, or must else be confessed to be compositions, of the authors of which the memory has been lost." * Why this dilemma should be unavoidable does not appear. His remarks on English jealousy of *Ossian* are peculiarly interesting in view of the frequent earlier obtrusion of national pride and prejudice into the discussion. Percy gathered his *Runic Poetry*, Heron contends, to glorify the ancestors of the English; but these pieces are inferior in structure and in subject-matter to *Ossian*. He puts a similar interpretation on Johnson's criticism of *Ossian*. † The same note recurs in his description of the subjects of the vernacular ballads: "These ballads were either versified legends; or the praises of some popular character; or songs of triumph in memory of some victory; . . . or the bursting voice of hatred, rage, and contempt against a hostile people." ‡

Alexander Campbell, too, comes to the defence of *Ossian* in his not very creditable *Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland* (1798-99). The introductory *Conversation on Scottish Song* is largely occupied with the exposition of his unquestioning faith in the authenticity of the Ossianic poems. It closes with a somewhat fantastic parallel intended to expose the unreasonableness of those who, without knowing the Gaelic language, have presumed to cast suspicion on Macpherson's work. He supposes the case that *Chevy Chase*

* Robert Heron, *A New General History of Scotland*, Perth, 1794-99, 5 vols., vol. i, pp. 188-190.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 198, 199. ‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, pp. 401, 402.

has been introduced into China, translated into Chinese by a Scotsman, and warmly praised by a prominent critic. Presently some one impugns the authenticity of the poem. Other Scotsmen, coming later to China, are found unable to recite a single stanza, though they assert that they know the poem to be genuine. At length a great lord arrives, who authenticates the ballad by reading it from Percy's *Reliques*.* In the body of the work the author discusses the more prominent editions of the Scottish ballads, without adding anything of importance to criticism. He also prints a collection of songs and ballads.

The wide range of the occasional criticism of this period, inclusive of the multitude of scattered comments which necessarily have been passed over, the striking absence of adverse utterances, and, most of all, the great number of ballads printed in the collections and elsewhere, indicate most clearly the height which the taste for popular poetry had attained at the close of the century. A. S. Cottle's translation (1797) of the first volume of the Copenhagen edition (1787) of the poetic *Edda* floated easily along upon the swelling current.† Before adducing the final testimony of the English and Scottish ballad poets, we may review the situation in the Scandinavian countries during the two decades. Here, also, we find the voice of reproach almost stilled, and the chorus of approval growing loud and clear.

Danish literature of the eighties and nineties, though somewhat unsettled, was characterized by a growing ro-

* A. Campbell, *An Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1798-99, pp. 46-48.

† On Cottle's *Icelandic Poetry*, and criticism connected with it, see Farley, *Scandinavian Influences*, pp. 129 ff.

mantic spirit, whose beginnings have been noted in the preceding chapter. After the death of Ewald in 1781, no great poet, with the possible exception of Baggesen, arose to carry the banner before Oehlenschläger's advent at the dawn of the nineteenth century; but there were minor poets who piped and carolled with a will. What German influence lost in Klopstock it gained with usury in Herder and Bürger. No doubt Danish men of letters learned to know the English ballads chiefly through Herder and Ursinus. Soon, however, there is definite evidence of acquaintance with the *Reliques*; and the *Kjöbenhavnske nye Efterretninger*, which long had been taking notice of English publications, reviewed during the first four years of the eighties translations into Danish of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Sir Charles Grandison*, the *Night Thoughts*, and *Jane Shore*. Thus German and English influences entered together into the development of romanticism in Denmark and, in a great measure through Denmark, in the other Scandinavian countries.

At the outset we have to notice in Denmark several ballad publications. The first was a collection of ballads and other older poetry, which appeared under the title *Levninger af Middel-Alderens Digtekunst* (1780). The editor appears to have been B. K. Sandvig, who the year before had published a number of scaldic and saga poems, entitled *Danske Sange af det ældste Tidsrum*. In the preface to the *Levninger* (Relics)* the editor says this is to be regarded as a continuation of the preceding work. It is remarkable, he observes, that so few have turned to an historical and critical examination of the native language and poetry.

* This title suggests Percy's work.

Worm, it is true, was an honorable exception ; but in part his material was never published, and in part he has been forgotten.

Vedel and Syv are given very favorable mention, particularly Syv, whom the writer thinks to have been the editor of *Tragica* (1657); this opinion is now discredited. Some of Syv's material, however, has come into the hands of this successor ; from the historian Suhm, furthermore, he has acquired two sixteenth-century manuscripts formerly owned by Langebek ; from these sources he has chosen only the best texts. He emphasizes the great desirability of a complete edition of the ancient poetry, with translations into Danish, and notes. Alas, he complains, how seldom is a Macpherson to be found ! Want of ability, not want of love for the cause, prevents him from doing the work himself. Thus far the preface.

The collection contains eighteen numbers, most of them ballads. Among them are *Ebbe Skammelsen*, *Kloster-Ranet*, *Habors ulykkelige Elskov*, and *Herr Aage og Jomfrue Else*. There are short notes under the titles in the table of contents. The ballad of Habor the editor describes as the oldest in the list. His comments on the celebrated *Herr Aage og Jomfrue Else* are particularly interesting for their reference to Percy's parallel ; the following is a complete translation : " A very ancient ballad. A horrible piece, full of melancholy beauties, and certainly one of the oldest in the collection. A parallel is found in Percy's *Reliques*. In the original, No. 2, there is no refrain ; I do not believe it ever had one, since the energy and march of the poem hardly permitted it." The ballad he refers to is probably Percy's *Sweet William's Ghost*.

This work was followed by a second volume, under the same title, edited by Rasmus Nyerup (1784). In the preface he justifies the title of "folk-songs," which he had used in his prospectus. In the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, he argues, they were very popular among the people of birth and culture, to whom these love "romances" (ballads) and heroic ballads served in lieu of society verse, drinking-song, and sentimental aria alike. In those times, lay and learned, women above all, vied with one another in recording the old poems, while their descendants of the present, instead of singing the ballads of *Axel* or of *Hagbard*, or something else that smacks of the North, amuse themselves with Voltaire or with operatic arias. Nevertheless, since the ballads have been sung from king to shepherd, they deserve the name of "Danish folk-songs."

In these remarks, and in his emphasis on the linguistic and antiquarian value of the old poetry, Nyerup harks back to the good old patriotic tradition of Vedel and Syv. The poetic qualities he does not rate very highly. Further, if it were true, as Gram insisted, that the Danish ballads were simply drawn together from German sources, this has no significance in view of the common interchange of traditions among all countries. "Good Lord," he exclaims, "if it were actually the case, it is well known that the mediaeval German minnesingers imitated the poets of Provence, these again the Romans, and the Romans the Greeks."

Had readers enough interest, he continues, perhaps a Sandvig or someone else might be induced to publish a critical edition of the entire corpus of Danish ballads. It is small honor to the national literature that these monuments of not a few centuries of wit and pastime should be read only in

the miserable and uncritical existing editions, from Vedel's of 1591 to Höpfner's of 1764. As a motto for the possible work he suggests Árni Magnússon's finding upon a petition presented to the crown by Wielandt in 1710, looking to a republication of the "100" ballads: "Peder Syv's 'Kämpeviser' can hardly be described as very edifying; nevertheless they have their use as regards 'Philologiam Danicam.' Throughout there is nothing bad in them, but something to divert such as love a tale, and there is no reason, therefore, why they should not be reprinted and the ballad book multiplied."

The texts, Nyerup explains, are all from ancient manuscripts in the Royal Library, mostly from Codex *A*, of the latter part of the sixteenth century, bound under Árni Magnússon's name. Several other sources have been used as well.

This volume contains twenty-six numbers, most of them real ballads, but others of a moralizing cast; one of these even found its way into a later Danish hymnal. Among the titles are *Liden Engels Vise* and *Hillelilles Vise*. The arrangement and treatment are much as in the first volume. The two editors thus made a respectable approach to a critical method; Nyerup was to carry his work much further in the acceptable edition which he, with Abrahamson and Rahbek, issued thirty years later. The two books of *Levninger*, now very scarce, have been considered in some detail because of their intrinsic value in the Scandinavian revival. It is quite evident that Percy's work gave much of the impetus; but the persistence of the native ballad faith in Denmark must by no means be forgotten.

A larger collection of ballads and heroic songs was made in the Faroe Islands by J. C. Svabo in 1781-82. It was not

published, and the manuscript still remains unprinted in the Royal Library in Copenhagen. The editor's preface is brief, yet contains a few points of interest. He came to the Faroes originally on some royal mission, but thought it worth his trouble to gather the old songs that were threatened with destruction. Incomplete as they are, they will aid future students of Norse antiquities. The Koran is found in public libraries, hurtful as it is; why not, then, these songs, though their worth be not great? The dates of the pieces, he continues, are not known, but are various. A tradition still holds in the islands that a great book was brought long ago from Iceland, out of which these songs were taken. The material in the first volume he describes as heroic ballads, and makes some comments on the refrains, which go by different names according to their form. The two other volumes contain songs of various kinds. The editor closes his remarks with the wish that the Danish dominions might be searched for similar materials.* Faroe relics have since been worthily edited by Hammershaimb in his *Færösk Anthologi*.

The ballad of *Kloster-Ranet*, published in the first volume of the *Levninger*, was issued separately in 1786 by James Johnstone, a British chaplain resident in Copenhagen, with an English translation, in honor of the nuptials of a Danish princess.† He translated also the *Lodbrokar-Quida* (1782), and otherwise took an interest in making Northern literature known to his countrymen.‡

* J. C. Svabo, *Færöeske Kvæðir, eller Gamle Kjempe-Sange, samt Rujmur*, MS. Gl. Kgl. Saml. 2894 a, b, c, in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, 3 vols.

† Johnstone, James, *The Robbing of the Nunnery*, n.p., 1786.

‡ For an account of Johnstone's performances, see Farley, *Scandinavian Influences*, pp. 72 ff., and *passim*.

A curious anonymous publication appeared in 1788 under the title *En Viise om den stærke Kiempe Mimring Tand*. It is a parody, based on the story of the smallest of the old ballad giants, and accompanied with a mock commentary purporting to set forth the actual prehistoric giant occupation of Denmark. The editor says he has been moved by the dearth of ballads, which for some time he has observed, to draw this one from an ancient manuscript and give it to the public. It deserves to be associated with the oldest in Syv's collection, and should by all means be included in any new edition. It must be of the same venerable antiquity as the first among Syv's ballads; this is proved by references in them to Diderich of Bern, who is known to have died in 624. The other giants mentioned must have been his contemporaries: this for the benefit of future antiquarians, who might be misled by the date of the present piece, 1788, to think that there are yet men of such a measure in Denmark; and every one knows that giants are no more. Rudbeck has shown that the sons of Anak settled Scandinavia; but the Jews are reported to have been only as grasshoppers beside the sons of Anak. Given the heights of the Jews, the sons of Anak must have been one hundred and fifty-four yards in stature, or three times that of the ballad giants, the smallest of whom, Mimring Tand, was fifteen yards beneath the knees. The diminution down to our times is normal, and must be laid to the use of tobacco, coffee, and wine. The whole thing is an amusing satire on historical and antiquarian exaggerations, based in so large a measure on an earlier simple faith in ballad evidence.

P. F. Suhm, however, the principal historical writer of

this period, did not lay himself open to particular criticism on that score. In his monumental *Historie af Danmark* (1782-1828), published in part after his death, he discusses ballad evidence in various connections, but usually in a discriminating manner, subjecting it to the test of other sources. Thus he makes extensive use of the admirable ballads of *Marsk Stig*, but so, for that matter, do all historians of the present day.

In Sweden no ballad collections were published during this period. Indeed, literature was here less completely under the rising star of romanticism than in Denmark. The classical tendencies from the preceding period still maintained a strong, but precarious, footing. Both parties drew in large measure upon England and, to a less extent, upon France; but the new ideas from Germany, at first not very powerful, were destined eventually to weigh down the declining balance for romanticism. The division of opinion in this period is reflected in ballad criticism.

Among those who were interested in *Ossian* and British traditional poetry at this time was J. F. Neikter, a Montesquieuan student of primitive culture, and from 1785 professor and librarian at the University of Uppsala. A general groundwork for his interests appears in his series of dissertations *De Efficacia Climatum ad Variam Gentium Indolem precipue Ingenia et Mores* (1777-97). These ideas he applied more particularly to literature in an *Undersökning om ordsakerne til smakens olikhet, upkomst och fall hos särskilte folkslag* (1787). In the special domain of folk-lore he issued dissertations *De Pugnis Prodigiosis in Coelo praecipue visis* (1789), in which he treated the "wild hunt" and similar traditions, *De Medicina per Incantationem* (1792-93),

and *De Gente Antiqua Troll* (1793-99), the latter a discussion of the supposed primitive Lappish and Finnish inhabitants of the North.

In his lectures, beginning in 1785, he put Homer, the Hebrew poets, the bards, and the scalds together as popular poets, and habitually used the term "visa" (ballad) in referring to their productions. He was acquainted with Lowth, Hurd, Blair, Percy, Wood, and Warton. Blair's views on *Ossian*, as equal to Homer, Neikter accepted fully. His lectures of 1786 dealt particularly with romantic themes, Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* serving as one of his chief authorities. In the same connection he touched on the ballads, with references to Evans, Herder, and Danish popular poetry. Neikter, furthermore, was first in Sweden to deal seriously with Shakespeare. He knew other English poets, and particularly admired Milton.*

Another Uppsala professor, a friend of Neikter, sharing his views, was the distinguished Orientalist, J. A. Tingstadius. He was largely influenced by Lowth in putting *Ossian* on a par with the Hebrew prophets as a popular poet. Much of his theory appears in the lecture with which he opened his academic work in 1786, *Om österländska poësiens egenskaper*. His point of view in general comes out interestingly in a caution to his young auditors not to let prejudice darken science, neither to reject the ancient learning as antiquated nor to condemn new information in this or any other branch of knowledge because, peradventure, it was unknown to the fathers. Blanck points out, however, that Tingstadius, in common with most of his contemporaries,

* This sketch is a *résumé* of Blanck's thorough discussion of Neikter, in his *Nordiska renässansen*, pp. 243 ff.

really had scant appreciation of the simple poetry of the ballads.*

Jakob Tengström, a friend of Kellgren, and, like him, a disciple of Porthan, aligned himself with the moderns by holding up Oriental poetry and *Ossian* against the Greek and Roman classics. In 1780 he gained an Academy prize by asserting the possibility of attaining eminence in literature without a dependence upon the ancient models. *Ossian*, he contends, does not follow the Aristotelian rules in every particular; but Greek laws are not binding upon a Northern bard. Old Norse poetry, he proceeds, has many good points, yet cannot compare with the classics or with the poetry of the present. F. M. Franzén, a younger follower of Porthan, in his dissertations, *Historiola Orationis Humanae* (1791, 1795), discussed, in much the same spirit, Homer, *Ossian*, and Finnish runic literature, finding in them evidences of the high state of poetry in early times. Also he knew Blair, Lowth, Warton, and other British writers in this field. Anders Lidbeck, professor in the University of Lund, praised Shakespeare and Gray, and spoke highly of the touching character of the ballads; he was acquainted with the imitations of Bürger, Baggesen, Kellgren, and Goldsmith. His colleague in history, N. H. Sjöborg, commenting, in his valuable antiquarian work, *Inledning til kännedom af fäderneslandets antiquiteter* (1797), on the prominence of ballads and romances in the Middle Ages, recognized in them neither taste nor harmony; † here, however, he echoed Dalin's opinion.

* Blanck, *Den nordiska renässansen*, pp. 265 ff.

† N. H. Sjöborg, *Inledning til kännedom af fäderneslandets antiquiteter*, Lund, 1797, p. 55. On Tengström, Franzén, Lidbeck, and Sjöborg, cf. Blanck's *Nordiska renässansen*, pp. 279 ff.

Nevertheless, the century closed in a blaze of glory for the ballads and their distinguished associate, *Ossian*. Erik Skjöldebrand, who some thirty years earlier had written a tragedy, *Habor och Signil*, as an improvement on Messenius's piece on the same theme, took his seat (1797) in the Royal Academy of Letters, History, and Antiquities with a paper on the suitability of *Ossian* as a subject for antiquarian research, and on the similarity between this poetry and that of the old Scandinavian "bards." He fairly outdid Blair, his chief source, in praise of the Scottish Homer. Regarding Macpherson's originals as ballads, he urged the collection of Swedish popular poetry.* On his withdrawal from the presidency of the Academy in the following year, he delivered an equally uncritical oration *Om de så kallade ballader*, in which he praised *Ossian* and the British ballads most warmly, and to which he appended a specimen of his own composition in this kind.†

Our review of the Swedish development of theory may fittingly be concluded with Blanck's closing remarks on this enthusiast: "Skjöldebrand's point of view is highly typical of the fashion of the time for seeing the Northern past through foreign, Ossianic spectacles. An impetus was needed from without. It seems striking how dependent, on the whole, he was upon English literature."‡ The same dependence will appear, to a great extent, in certain occa-

* Erik Skjöldebrand, *Tal, innefattande en undersökning huruvida Ossians sånger kunna förtjena våre fornforskares uppmärksamhet*, etc., *Kongl. vitterhets-, hist.- och antiq.-akademiens handlingar*, Part VII, Stockholm, 1802.

† Skjöldebrand, *Tal . . . om de så kallade ballader*, MS., in the Academy archives, Stockholm.

‡ Blanck, *Den nordiska renässansen*, p. 308.

sional comment that remains to be recorded. For Sweden, as well as for Denmark and Norway, this may best be considered in connection with the history of the development of the art ballad.

The best of the new ballads in the early part of the period was written by the Norwegian poet, Edward Storm (1749-1794), and later circulated at the philanthropic instance of the "Efterslægtsselskab" (Society for Posterity), a Danish organization that sought to replace vulgar street-ballads by something better in the same vein. Storm's poem, the classic *Zinklars Vise* (1782), celebrates in good ballad style the defeat of a troop of Scottish mercenaries which had invaded Norway. Considerable discussion grew out of this well-intentioned movement to refine the public taste. Jens Zetlitz, another Norwegian poet, particularly known for his drinking-songs, took issue with the puritans by an article in the Danish weekly, *Samleren* (1788, Part II, Nos. 44 and 45), contending that the ballads of the crowd were no more "stupid, vulgar, and malicious" than much in the life of the higher classes. Not many years later a writer in the Danish periodical, *Iris* (February, 1795), deplored the unlicensed circulation of questionable "penny-ballads," suggested a strict censorship, and proposed the offering of prizes for "good" popular ballads. Meanwhile, Claus Frimann, a Norwegian clergyman, had met the desires of the reformers by publishing a volume of original poems in the popular vein to supply a want of suitable poetry for the country people. In the preface to this volume of *Almuens Sanger* (1790) he speaks of the ballads current among the hill and dale folk as having too much "witchcraft and devilry" to be desirable reading. He published a similar collection for

seamen, under the title *Den syngende Sömand* (1793). His work, though not closely imitative of the ballad, was yet a part of the general tendency.

Storm wrote another good ballad in *Thorwald Vidförle. Zinklars Vise*, entirely aside from its moral value, was immediately recognized as a model of its kind, and was frequently recommended for imitation. Thus K. L. Rahbek, in his *Danske Tilskuer* (Spectator), March 19, 1792, gave an excellent analysis of the poem as an exemplar for intending balladists; he found a motto for his article in the passage from Addison's *Chevy Chase* paper on the general popularity of the ballad with the folk as an indication of its fitness to "gratify the mind of man." In the number for August 21, 1800, the editor praised Sorterup's little known *Heltesange*, and compared them with Storm's poem. Altogether, this periodical was most active in furthering the ballad cause through discussion and the publication of imitations; furthermore, it was the conspicuous organ of English influence.

In 1788, *Morgenposten* printed an adaptation of the old ballad of *Aage og Else*, prefaced by a statement from the writer, N. Weyer, that he had been led to make the attempt through his admiration of *Sweet William's Ghost* in the *Reliques*.* A translation of *Lenore* appeared in *Minerva* for December, 1790; but a reviewer speaks of the ballad as already well known, and there may have been earlier renderings. From this time, particularly, English and German influences combined with the reviving interest in Danish popular poetry to accelerate the production of imitations. As further in-

* Abrahamson, Nyerup, and Rahbek, *Udvalgte danske Viser*, vol. v, pp. 138, 139. Weyer's ballad follows. .

stances of the growth of the native tradition, it should be mentioned that C. H. Pram, one of the founders of *Minerva*, introduced references to the ballad of *Hagbard og Signe* in his Thomsonian poem, *Emilias Kilde* (1782), and put a ballad on Rosmer Havmand in his *Stærkodder* (1785), a poem based on Saxo. He wrote also various ballad imitations. Jonas Rein produced a tragedy on the Hagbard and Signe theme in his *Hagen og Axel* (1786). Yet the main impetus toward imitation came, after all, from outside sources.

In 1789, Baggesen, the most conspicuous Danish poet of the period, made a tour through Germany. On his travels he paid a visit to Bürger, to whom he introduced himself as the translator of the German poet's *Lenardo und Blandine*. The conversation turned upon ballads, which Bürger praised most highly as the "real poetry;" he also expressed a desire to learn Danish in order to read in the original the ballads he had so much admired in translation.* No doubt this meeting stimulated Baggesen, who had already done some work of this kind, to further endeavors. His *Ludvigs Gienfærd* (1788), for which, by his own confession, he got the suggestion from a Scottish ballad, called forth both imitations and parodies. It is on a subject similar to that of *Lenore*, which Baggesen also turned into Danish. His *Ridder Ro og Ridder Rap* and his *Dansk Tranquebar-Vise* are excellent examples of the humorous vein. Most poets, great or small, fell into the prevailing fashion. The periodicals, during this decade and beyond, were filled with poems of this and similar types, both serious and humorous. In addition to the periodicals already mentioned, such others as

* Jens Baggesen, *Labyrinthen, Danske Værker*, Copenhagen, 1827-32, 12 vols., vol. viii, pp. 432-436.

Freia, Iris og Hebe, Höst's *Museum*, *Skandinavisk Museum*, *Euphrosyne*, and *Hermoder* (Christiania) helped to swell the torrent. In *Almeen Læsning af blandet Indhold* for May, 1800, Oehlenschläger, the rising poet of the new century, printed one of his earlier ballads, *Sivald og Thora*; in July came another, *Fridleif og Helga*. His romantic manifesto, the *Digte* (1803), contained a number of others.

Bellman (1740–95), the Swedish poet of the century, did not use the strict ballad form to any great extent; but a good part of his convivial verse, written largely in the preceding period, might sort broadly under this type. In his *Fredmanns testamente* there is a Bacchic song on the model of the older heroic ballad,* and similar in quality to some of Dalin's earlier work. Bellman's *Kämpevisa öfver segern vid Hogland den 17 Juli 1788*† is also in the ancient manner.

It was not long before the *Lenore* obsession took hold upon Swedish verse; in part, Danish influence was responsible. Kellgren, now an eminent poet, owing much to Milton, translated Baggesen's *Ludvigs Gienfærd* under the title *Fredriks vålnad* (1793).‡ It was brilliantly parodied by Anna Maria Lenngren, a very popular writer, in her *Anders och Köks-Kajsa* (1793).§ Franzén, also a highly significant poet, and much influenced by Milton, in his *Hemkomsten* || treated the *Friar of Orders Gray* motif; he wrote other ballads; his *Gamle knekten* (1793), as Blanck remarks, is related to Goldsmith's ballad in the *Vicar of Wakefield*,

* C. M. Bellman, *Samlade skrifter*, Stockholm, 1861, 5 vols., vol. iii, p. 420.

† *Ibid.*, vol. iv, p. 166.

‡ J. H. Kellgren, *Samlade skrifter*, Örebro, 1860, 3 vols., vol. iii, p. 103.

§ Anna Maria Lenngren, *Samlade skaldeförsök*, Stockholm, 1857, p. 320.

|| F. M. Franzén, *Samlade dikter*, Örebro, 1867–69, 7 vols., vol. i, p. 133.

a favorite book with Franzén.* A. C. Kullberg, one of the principal mediators in this field, translated two of Bürger's ballads in his *Leonora* and *Prästens dotter i Taubenhain* (1795), and Lewis's famous piece in his *Alonzo den tappre och skön Imogine* (1799).† A great host of lesser writers joined in the competition, and the periodicals, as in Denmark, were choked with productions of this sort. Johansson, who has carefully investigated this movement, points out that the Swedish imitations proceeded less directly from the popular ballads than did the Danish. He contends, further, that the sentimental ballad was developed chiefly under English influence; Goldsmith's *Hermit* had been translated, with the *Vicar of Wakefield*, as early as 1782, and created a great vogue.‡ Whatever the source, the fever had come. Some opposition there was, to be sure. A writer in *Läsning i blandade ämnen* (Nos. 9 and 10, 1798) protested against the depraving of taste through the vulgar horrors of the *Lenore* brood; and Leopold, "Sweden's Pope," as he has been called, in a discussion *Om diktens bruk i poesien* spoke strongly against the encroaching fashion, and otherwise denounced the ballads.§ But nothing could stay the tide, which ran on well into the new century. Johansson maintains, however, that the rage of imitation, little grounded though it was in the native traditions, helped to prepare for a real revival of popular poetry.

Thus in all the Scandinavian countries both criticism and

* Blanck, *Den nordiska renässansen*, pp. 357 ff.

† A. C. Kullberg, *Poetiske försök*, Stockholm, 1816, 2 vols.

‡ J. V. Johansson, *Den förromantiska balladen i Sverige*, Göteborg högskolas årsskrift, 1912 (Part II), Göteborg, 1912, pp. 16 ff.

§ Carl G. Leopold, *Samlade skrifter*, Stockholm, 1814-33, 6 vols., vol. v, pp. 121 ff.

poetic production had brought the ballad prominently before the public. Aside from the very considerable influence on literature, the movement created a demand for modern editions of the ancient ballads. Abrahamson, Nyerup, and Rahbek's notable *Udvalgte danske Viser* appeared in 1812-14. In 1814-16, Geijer and Afzelius issued their valuable *Svenska folkvisor*, the first collection of Swedish ballads; the third volume contained translations from the Scottish. Thus new influences were created, the end of which is not yet.

We have still to give some attention to criticism connected with the influence of the ballad upon poetry in England and Scotland. If the evidence presented on this point is not exhaustive, it may be illustrative.

The most significant testimony from the early years of this period came from Cowper. August 4, 1783, he writes to Unwin in part as follows: "The *ballad* is a species of poetry, I believe, peculiar to this country, equally adapted to the drollest and the most tragical subjects. Simplicity and ease are its proper characteristics. Our forefathers excelled in it; but we moderns have lost the art. It is observed, that we have few good English odes. But to make amends, we have many excellent ballads, not inferior perhaps in true poetical merit to some of the very best odes that the Greek or Latin languages have to boast of. It is a sort of composition I was ever fond of, and if graver matters had not called me another way, should have addicted myself to it more than to any other." He praises the ballads of Swift, Arbuthnot, Pope, and Gay.*

In view of this clear utterance it is interesting to examine

* W. Cowper, *Correspondence*, ed. T. Wright, London, 1904, 4 vols., vol. ii, pp. 91, 92.

John Gilpin, written the year before. There is nothing of the old ballads in the subject-matter; in this respect it suggests rather some of the humorous pieces of the writers mentioned in the letter; but the tone is more reminiscent than theirs of the ancient ballad manner. The metre and bits of phraseology bring *Chevy Chase* to mind.

Burns seems, on the whole, to have been little affected by the ballad in his original poetry. Yet among the early influences on his development were *The Evergreen* and *Hardyknute*.^{*} His work in connection with *The Scots Musical Museum* and, later, with George Thomson's *Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs* must, however, be counted in part for ballad interests. There are a few expressions in his letters to Thomson which throw some light on his views of the ballad. Thus in a letter of September 16, 1792, asking for a list of the airs to which he is to give the words, he says: "Whether in the simplicity of the ballad, or the pathos of the song, I can only hope to please myself in being allowed at least a sprinkling of our native tongue." † In a letter written a year later, communicating *Auld Lang Syne*, he observes: "You must, after all is over, have a number of ballads, properly so called: *Gill Morice*, *Tranent Muir*, *M'Pherson's Farewell*, *Battle of Sheriff-Muir* . . . *Hardyknute*, *Barbara Allan*." ‡ To Dr. Moore he writes, February 28, 1791: "The ballad on Queen Mary was begun while I was busy with Percy's *Reliques*." § To Mrs. Dunlop he sends, with a letter of August 22, 1792, *O saw ye bonny Lesley*, which he describes as a parody on *My bonnie Lizie*

^{*} R. Burns, *Works*, ed. Currie, fourth edition, London, 1803, 4 vols., vol. i, pp. 278 ff.

† *Ibid.*, vol. iv, p. 4.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 346.

Bailie.^{*} This, of course, is lyric. His *John Barleycorn* and *The Whistle* have more of the narrative quality. The first line of *John Barleycorn* suggests the opening of *King Orfeo*. Burns's work, though mainly lyric, was yet part of the ballad movement.

The advertisement to the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798 makes no direct reference to ballad influence. In the preface to the second edition, two years later, Wordsworth cautions the reader not to be prejudiced against the simplicity of the language by the "false criticism" in Johnson's ballad parodies, and contrasts the content of an admired stanza of *The Babes in the Wood* with the "contemptible" matter of the critic's "Strand" verses. "In both of these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in no respect differ from the most unimpassioned conversation;" what the poet says is the thing.[†] This utterance places the ballad in direct contact with Wordsworth's ruling principles, and in a large measure justifies the title of the collection.

Aside from the simplicity of the style and the frequent use of the ballad stanza, there is little in Wordsworth's poems to suggest the older ballads. *Ellen Irwin* is in part on the subject of the ballad of *Helen of Kirconnel*; but in general, his verses have not much in common with traditional subjects, and are to be judged by quite different standards.

In this and other respects *The Ancient Mariner* holds a place apart. Although its subject has little to do with ballad plot, its supernaturalism is in a way a sublimation of bal-

^{*} R. Burns, *Works*, ed. Currie, fourth edition, London, 1803, 4 vols., vol. ii, p. 400.

[†] W. Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, second edition of the first volume, and a second volume, London, 1800, pref., vol. i, pp. xxxix-xli.

lad wonder. The stanza, the narrative quality, and certain technical features, such as repetition of phrase, bring the poem near to the traditional form. Wordsworth took from the ballad not much more than its commonplace attributes; Coleridge seized more of the exotic and intangible.

The Scottish ballads produced in the latter part of the period are not in any sense so notable, but are interesting chiefly for Scott's connection with the movement. The impulse came through William Taylor's visit to Germany in 1781. In 1790, he translated *Lenore*; it was published in 1796. In the same year, M. G. Lewis, who had sojourned in Germany not long before, published a translation of Goethe's *Erlkönig*. There were other translations of *Lenore* about the same time, among them Scott's, under the title of *William and Helen*. Together with this poem he printed also *The Chase*, a translation of Bürger's *Wilde Jäger*. Lewis's *Monk* (1796) contained an adaptation of a Danish ballad under the title of *The Water-King*, and also the original ballad, *Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogene*. These poems reappeared in Lewis's *Tales of Wonder* (1801), where also he placed two other Danish ballads, *Elver's Hoh* and *The Erl-King's Daughter*. Among the amazing contents of these volumes, which exhibit imitations ranging nearly from the worst to the best, were Scott's *Glenfinlas* and *The Eve of St. John*, together with several of his translations from the German. Southey and Leyden also contributed original ballads. *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* reprinted some of those named, and brought further imitations by various authors. In this respect, as in others, Scott's work notes significantly the wide interest in balladry at the beginning of the nineteenth century.



CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

THE varied activities during the last two decades of the eighteenth century indicate clearly the results of the entire movement. For England and Scotland, the unusually large number of collections of popular poetry, and of older poetry in general, which appeared during these twenty years shows how much the demand had grown since the time of the first *Old Ballads* and of Ramsay's early productions. The *Reliques*, coming mid-way, supplied a real want, but created a new appetite, which after a space was hardly to be satisfied by a vastly increasing output of similar publications. As between England and Scotland, the Percy had the honors of the field; but the Douglas was soon to come in Walter Scott. In striking contrast to the organic expansion of interest in Great Britain, there was, during a greater part of the century, something like stagnation in Denmark, which had comparatively satisfactory collections to begin with, and, more remarkably, in Sweden, which had none; but in both of the Scandinavian countries there slowly grew up a desire which called forth respectable ballad editions early in the nineteenth century. Percy's work contributed much to this result.

With regard to formal criticism, also, the discussion toward the close of the eighteenth century denotes the advance of ballad investigation. British editors before Percy had no theories and little proper sense of the distinctiveness of the ballad type. Even the editor of the *Reliques* failed to make requisite demarcation between the various kinds of poetry included in his collection, and gave only passing

attention to technical questions ; but he did formulate with sufficient clearness the doctrine of minstrel authorship, about which much of the subsequent debate was to revolve. Ritson, in particular, circumscribed Percy's tenet ; and various Scottish writers, among them Pinkerton, came near to the theory of folk origins by ascribing a great part of the ballads to shepherds and other humble authors. Both Pinkerton and Ritson gave more attention to matters of form than did earlier editors ; they, and Herd, as well, gave evidence of a desire, till then little marked, to distinguish carefully between ballad and other poetry, and of ability to make such distinction. In keeping with this principle was the new reverence for the texts as texts, notable particularly in Ritson and Herd, as its absence was conspicuous in the editor of the *Reliques*. Percy remained steadfast to his view, but retarded only for a time the ultimate recognition of other methods. The two principals to the controversy were Englishmen ; the Scots, with the exception of loquacious Pinkerton, were uncommunicative. A spokesman was soon to appear, however, in the editor of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

Even before the beginning of the eighteenth century, Scandinavian critics had arrived at a definite conception of the ballad as a type, and had given considerable thought to formal details ; eighteenth-century editors added little that was new in this field. Nor were they much concerned with special theories regarding authorship. In comparative study of the materials, however, as early a writer as Vedel was a pioneer. Syv went farther in the same direction. His comparisons between the Danish ballads and the *Heldenbuch*, Gram, with peculiar bias, extended so as to derive the he-

roic poems directly from German sources ; this wilful or, at best, mistaken assumption, Nyerup, anticipating Grimm, corrected by establishing the broader interrelationship of popular poetry. One of the most interesting features of early Scandinavian criticism was the particular treatment of the connection between ballads and other ancient Norse verse ; though the distinction in kinds became apparent through the labors of the seventeenth-century antiquarians, these various forms of poetry continued, naturally enough, to be more or less associated during the eighteenth century. The dependence upon popular traditions as historical sources gradually gave way to a more cautious scrutiny. Early Swedish and Danish writers in Latin had considerable influence on British scholars, an influence stretching throughout the eighteenth century, particularly in the English translations of Scandinavian poems and in the criticism connected with this work. Upon the growing use of the vernacular in Scandinavia, British knowledge of Scandinavian scholarship necessarily suffered a decline ; near the beginning of the nineteenth century the direct contact was in a measure reëstablished. In the latter part of our period Great Britain contributed considerably to discussion in Scandinavia. It was not till the middle of the nineteenth century, however, that Ritson's and Herd's principles of textual criticism, particularly through Motherwell, helped in a great measure to develop Grundtvig's epochal methods.

The predominance of English, as against Scottish, editors in number and in critical power was joined with a general predominance of comment on the part of English writers. In England there was a well-nigh unbroken continuity of occasional criticism from Addison to Wordsworth. The

somewhat apologetic tone of Addison's papers, as compared with Wordsworth's almost defiant championship of ballad simplicity, is strikingly indicative of the change which gradually came to give popular poetry its due without appeal to older or newer authority. Another illustrative sign is the nearly unanimous hostility of Addison's critics as contrasted with the nearly unanimous friendliness of commenters during the last decades of the century. According to my division, the first period, with the exception of Addison, was marked by opposition or indifference; the second, by indifference, tolerance, or even enthusiasm. After the appearance of the *Reliques* there was something of a lull while friend and foe listened with apprehension or amusement to Samuel Johnson's yea and nay; nay became yea, nevertheless, for Johnson's dying imprecations against *Chevy Chase* were lost in the swelling chorus of ballad approbation. Those who loved Scotland "better than truth" had during the entire century been favorably inclined toward the traditional verse; I have not found in a Scots writer a single hostile comment of any significance. On the whole, perhaps, the editors and critics of Scotland approached more closely the popular ideal, which, in the lyric mood, regards the ballad as worthy for itself, the living voice of a living folk; in England, where tradition for natural reasons had lost much in vitality, Sidney's aristocratic point of view, looking back and looking down to the ballads as interesting, even inspiring, but rude relics of a day that is past, prevailed in Addison and Percy. English and Scottish criticism, largely because of this difference in attitude, complemented each other most satisfactorily. The emulations and rivalries, of which the Tweed formed the less bloody boundary than of old,

were surely among the most potent forces in bringing about the remarkable ballad revival. A similar competition, of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark with one another, and of Scandinavia with Great Britain, stimulated considerably by the *Reliques*, resulted eventually in the erection of that noble house of fame, *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, to which our own *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* forms so worthy a counterpart. It should not be overlooked, however, that the ancient traditions of Scandinavia bore in themselves the power of resurrection. Holberg, Gram, and Dalin, like Johnson, succeeded only for a time in attaching odium to the ballads; among all the Norse races the favorable view conquered in the end, though not with the symmetrical progression observable in Great Britain.

A most interesting and illuminating prospect of the sweep of ballad interest throughout the century is afforded by taking note of the relation of ballad research and comment to the general study of literature and the production of literature. Addison found it proper to compare *Chevy Chase* to the classics; later investigators, like Percy, Warton, and the commentators on Shakespeare and on other English writers, felt that here was a more natural and profitable field of exposition. Scandinavian critics, from Vedel down, had a peculiarly appropriate domain for comparison in Old Norse verse. Thus ballad research and the more general occupation with literature exerted a mutual influence, both contributing to give a new complexion to the face of letters in Great Britain and Scandinavia. The use of ballad form and motif had, indeed, begun early in the century. From Sorterup to the Swedish balladists of a hundred years later the stream ran on, gaining volume remarkably in the latter

part of its course. Ballad imitation and adaptation became more and more common in Great Britain, and, on the whole, increasingly effective as the type became better known. I am tempted to risk the generalization that the earlier poets strove to lift the ballad up to a poetic level; accepting, for the moment, *The Nut-brown Maid* as a ballad, this was what Prior tried to do in *Henry and Emma*. Later poets, like Percy in *The Hermit of Warkworth*, sought to bring poetry down to the ballad; this tendency saw its best and its worst results in the work of Bürger and the British and Scandinavian imitators of *Lenore*. *The Lyrical Ballads* represent still another point of view, that of transmuting the precious values of antique song into a new poetry largely independent of ballad form and substance. The original work of Walter Scott is a notable illustration of this more indefinable influence of traditional verse upon literary art; both his poetry and his novels are deeply colored with ballad lore. From his time to our own, poets like Coleridge, Swinburne, and Kipling have testified to the vitality of the impulse.*

In Scandinavian literature of the nineteenth century, ballad influences were stronger and more constant than in English literature. Oehlenschläger inaugurated the romantic movement in Denmark with his *Digte* (1803), containing a good number of imitations; he did further work in the same *genre*, and employed ballad subjects for several of his plays, notably *Axel og Valborg* and *Hagbard og Signe*. Ingemann used popular material both in his novels and in his poetical romances, much after the fashion of Scott, to

* For a classified list of imitations, see R. S. Forsythe, *Modern Imitations of the Popular Ballads*, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, January, 1914, vol. xiii, pp. 88-97.

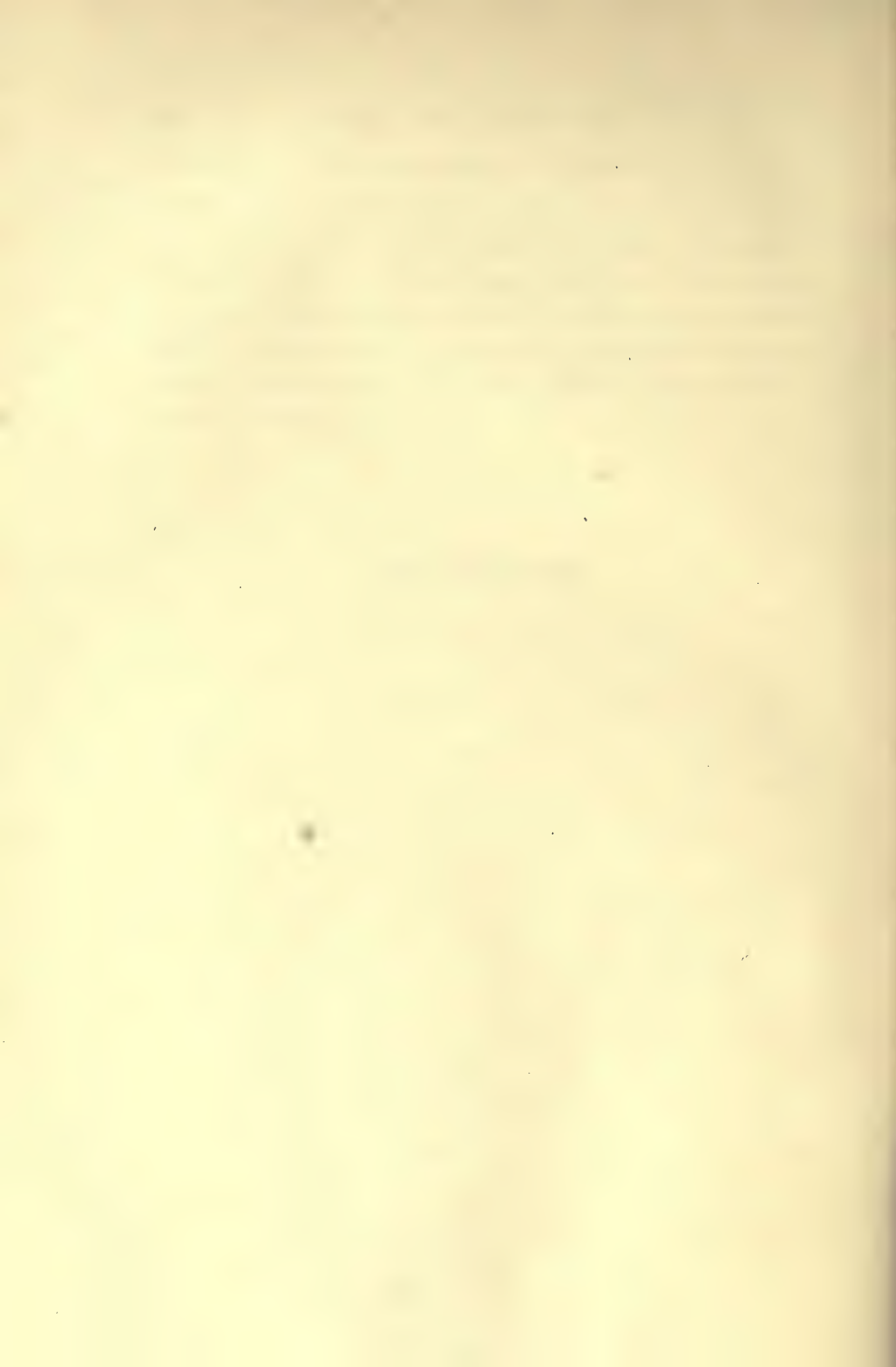
whom he owed not a little of his art. Henrik Hertz made dramatic capital of the old traditions in such pieces as *Svanehammen* and *Svend Dyrings Hus*. Christian Winther's *Hjortens Flugt* is a noble example of ballad inspiration. Heiberg's opera, *Elverhøj*, retains its popularity to this day. Holger Drachmann, among the more recent Danish writers, introduced ballad elements in plays such as *Hr. Oluf han rider* and *Gurre*; in *Den hellige Ild* he figures Edith, the heroine, as a haunting refrain; he reverts to popular themes with peculiar fondness in the most varied phases of his work. Ballad imitation was a very significant force in early Swedish romanticism; later poets, from Runeberg and Tegnér down to Strindberg, have confessed the influence. It was reserved for Norway, however, to produce, in Ibsen's *Fruen fra Havet*, the modern apotheosis of the ancient ballad. His early plays, *Gildet paa Solhaug* and *Olaf Liljekrans*,* both full of ballad elements, bear witness to the author's youthful interest as a collector and student of popular lore; but they are comparatively crude and inartistic. In *Fruen fra Havet*, on the contrary, the beautiful and touching Norse motif of the earthly maiden and the merman is treated with so consummate a mastery as to bring the old story close to the life we live. The ballad plot in its grim reality appears in the play, but heightened and unobtrusively moralized. At the close of Ibsen's drama the church bells of human love break the woman's thralldom, and spell the merman back, bereft of solace, into his dark haunts in the sea.

The ballad criticism of the eighteenth century was thus

* On the relation of this play to Norse ballad and story, see F. Paasche, *Olaf Liljekrans, Maal og Minne* (Christiania), 1914, Part III, pp. 142-161.

marked by two enduring results: it drew a goodly store of texts into the open light of day, thereby laying the foundation of real respect for traditional poetry upon which later criticism, English, Scottish, Scandinavian, and American, has built more stately mansions; it gave into the hands of poets the material from which many a noble fabric has been shaped. The delver and the artificer have worked together, and still are working.

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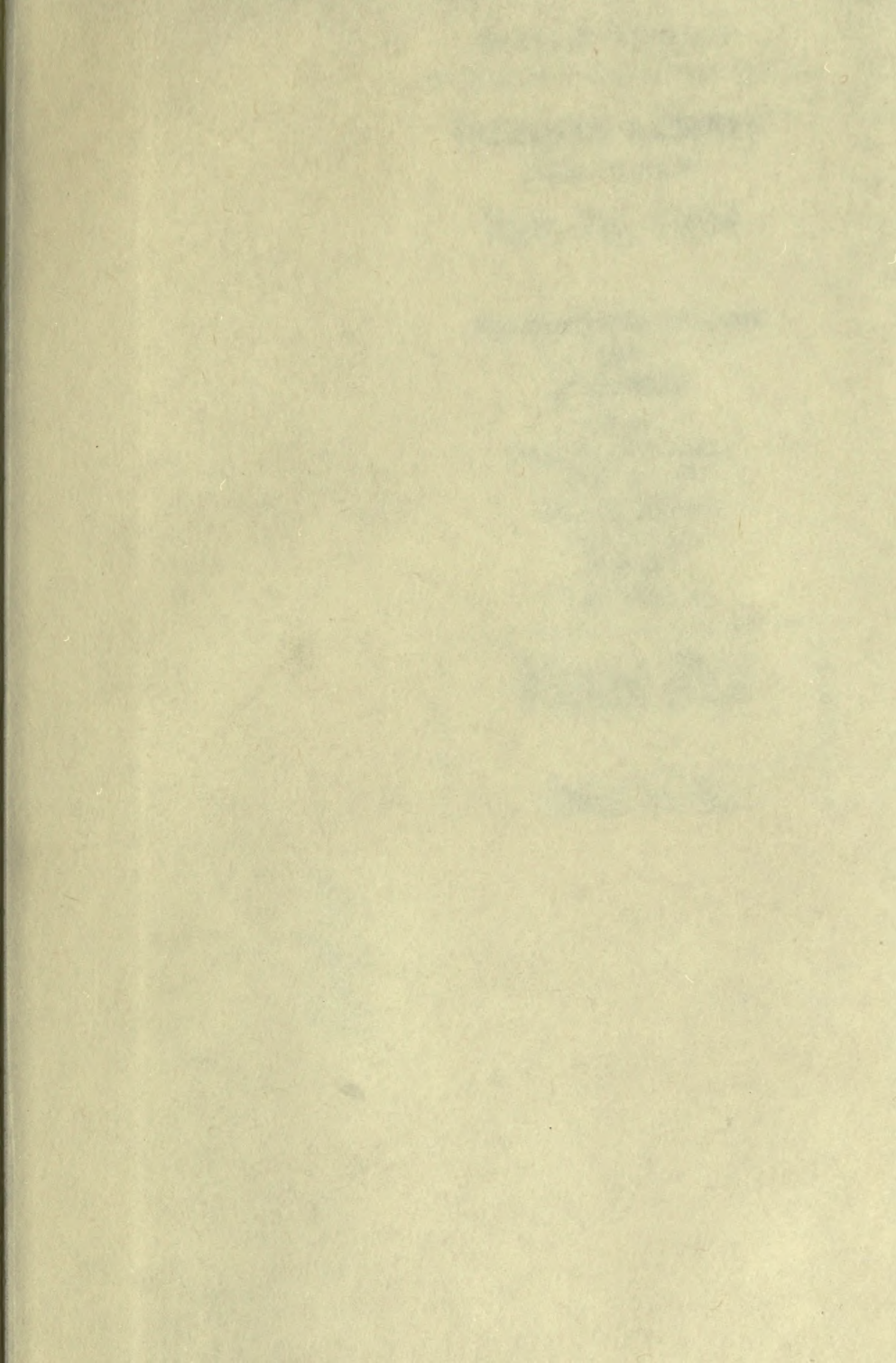
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